

ADVENTURE TIME

THE ENCHIRIDION

&
MARCY'S

Super Secret
SCRAPBOOK!!!

TRANSLATED FROM THE SCROLLS OF OOO BY

MARTIN OLSON

&
OLIVIA OLSON



DIVE DEEPER

INTO THE SECRETS OF THE LAND OF OOO

with this mysterious mash-up of *The Enchiridion* (the ancient hero's handbook, as featured on the series) and Marceline's private scrapbook.

It's like having two books in one . . . because it *is* two books in one! Don't believe it? Just peek under the dust jacket! Go ahead.

We'll wait. . .

When you've finished reading *The Enchiridion*, flip the book over and dig in to *Marcy's Super Secret Scrapbook!!!* Or vice versa! It's your call where to start. We'd suggest you read *The Enchiridion* first, but why listen to us?

All-new, gorgeous, hilarious, and grotesque illustrations? Ancient wizard lore, spells, curses, and jokes? Scribbles from and souvenirs of a cute demon girl growing up?

Goofball commentary by Finn, Jake, Marceline, and the Ice King? Check, check, check, check please!

From the same creative team behind the *New York Times* bestselling *Adventure Time Encyclopaedia*, this in-world compendium of all things Oooian is a humor-, paradox-, and literary contrivance-filled tome true to the imagination, innovation, and heart of *Adventure Time*.





WARNING!

TO BE READ ONLY BY

— HEROES —

WHOSE HEARTS ARE RIGHTEOUS

— AND —

LICENSED WIZARDS

WITH AAA ENCHANTMENT RATING OR *BETTER*
TOLD IN AND OUT OF LINEAR TIME

ABRIDGED FROM THE ORIGINAL TREATISE
CONSISTING OF EIGHT MILLION, SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND,
NINE HUNDRED AND THREE PAGES

— CONTAINING BOTH —

TRUE AND FALSE INFORMATION
CULLED FROM THE FUTURE AND PAST
OF THE SELF-BORN, INFINITE, AND
PARADOXICALLY SENTIENT
MULTIVERSE

*“Pegtulz braydin skirtziv hemzin
Twizton blaydin olpit jemzin”*

FROM THE DESK OF HUNSON ABADEER, LORD OF EVIL

Nightspherean Evil Enterprises, Inc.

665½ Bombast Boulevard

Penthouse of Pestilence, East Nightsphere City

The Nightsphere 06666

"We Own You"

My Devoted Evil Daughter, Marceline,

I admit we've had a somewhat volatile father-daughter relationship ever since the regrettable Fry Incident. Yes, we've had our ups and downs, but I daresay that now we're good? I hope so, daughter, because I have a small favor to ask of you.

Occasionally even the Lord of Evil overextends himself financially by going on a binge of evil excesses. While this is only to be expected, I currently find myself in a position where I need additional funds immediately. To that end, I have invented an app for the readers of magical grimoires, spell books, catalogs of grotesqueries, and whatnot. I call it the Magical Texting App™. It allows multiple readers of any given book to leave comments for one another, in real time, simply by talking into the pages.

I cast a spell and made a few extra copies of a random book from my library: a fascimile edition of THE ENCHIRIDION, an ancient book of Ooo. I've pre-loaded each copy with my Magical Texting App™, and I ask that you pass them around to your friends to help me test the Beta version. Just tell your friends to talk into the pages, and Magical Texts will materialize in the margins. I'll be able to hear and read all of your comments in my own copy and reply. Marceline, get these books out to everyone, and in return I'll buy you a new bass to jam with your friends and that idiot Ice King. Gotta go. TTYL!




From the Eternal Incarnation of Evil,

Dad

 Sure! I'm always up for getting a new bass. Hey, this magical texting is a pretty cool app. Nice one, Dad.

 Thanks. Don't forget to pass it around. The last version was full of glitches.

 Um, Dad? Did you notice that the old scrapbook I kept as a kid is attached to the end of this book? What's that about?

My dad. I think I know what happened. It seems I was looking for my car keys, set The Enchiridion on top of your diary by mistake, and then cast the Spell of El Merz on the old book to keep the pages from falling out.

The spell must've fused the books together. No biggie. I'll just cast another spell so that only you can open your kiddie book.

OK, the Magical Texting App seems to be working. The Enchiridion looks kinda cool, but the stuff I wrote as a kid is embarrassing. You're absolutely sure that NO ONE will be able to open that, right?

Dad?



Testing,
testing, one,
two, three.
Cool. Finn!
Check out
this magical
texting app!
Vo, ancient book!
Finn sucks an old
walrus skeleton!
Haha!



Huh.
That's weird.
I thought I destroyed
this book fighting
the Lich.

You did.
These are just
copies of a copy
Abadeer jacked
from someplace.
Marcy's passing
them around to
test this app.

Huh. V'know,
I never really read
it. I just used to sit
on it. Like on the
grass and stuff.

Haha. Since when
do you care if
your butt's dirty?
I'm taking a nap,
dude. Keep talking
into the book, and
give it to P-Bub if
it gets boring. Bye!

Hey, you're right.
This texting thing
is awesome.

Testing.
One, two, three!
Wah-wah-wah. Bubbly-
bun-bun-bun. Boom-
diggity-dawg.

Hey man, can you
keep it down a little?
I'm trying to sleep.

Wow, it picks up
right across the
room! Boogiddy-
boogiddy. Bing-
bing-bing!

C'mon, man.
Knock it off!

THE GREATEST HERO OF OOO



BILLY

ENCHIRIDION



THE ENCHIRIDION

A SUPREME MYSTICAL GRIMOIRE
IN TWO PARTS

BOOK THE FIRST

FOR HEROES ONLY

REGARDING THE MYSTERIOUS SYMBIOSIS BETWIXT HEROES AND WIZARDS

BOOK THE SECOND

FOR WIZARDS ONLY

A WIZARD'S GUIDE TO THE THREE ANCIENT PRECEPTS OF MAGIC

TRANSLATED
FROM THE
ANCIENT
SCROLLS



OUR
MOTTO:
"KEEP IT
TIGHT!"

THE COSMIC KEYS OF OOO REVEALED

From the Office of
Simon Petrikov

Graduate Teaching Assistant and PhD Candidate
The Department of Antiquarian Studies and Ancient Artifacts
UNIVERSITY OF PETROGRAD



Hey Ice King!
Are you around?
Check it out-
You wrote that!



I did?
No way! Really?

Yeah, a long
time ago. You
used to be a
scientist or
something.

How about that!
See, guys, I told
you I was smart!
When I marry
Princess Bubblegum
I'll take over her
lab and come
up with a hair-
growth Formula.
I'll make millions!
Have you seen
how many bald
wizards there are?

Cool plan, Ice King.
Stay on top of that.

Thanks! Let's do
lunch and I'll tell you
more about it!



Sorry
I think
we're busy
that day

What day?

...

Hello?
Did you
guys leave?

Is this book
working?

DEAREST BETTY,

ON MY RECENT EXPEDITION TO ISLAMABAD, IN A SECRET VAULT IN THE HINDU KUSH MOUNTAINS, I DISCOVERED AN INCREDIBLE ARTIFACT- AN ANCIENT BOOK KNOWN AS "THE ENCHIRIDION." LABORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE PAPER AND INK INDICATES SOME OF THE PAGES IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE BOOK PREDATE RECORDED HISTORY AND ARE COMPOSED OF PLANT DNA UNKNOWN ON EARTH.

STRANGEST OF ALL, HOWEVER, THE BOOK CLAIMS ITS ORIGINS ARE OTHERWORLDLY (OR "OTHER DIMENSIONAL"). IT SAYS THE EVENTS AND THE PROPHECIES WITHIN IT REFER TO A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PARALLEL UNIVERSE, PART OF A MUCH LARGER "MULTIVERSE," AND THAT SOME CONTENT MAY BE "MAGICALLY INTERPOLATING ITSELF INTO THE BOOK" (WHATEVER THAT MEANS)! OF COURSE IT ALL SOUNDS PREPOSTEROUS, BUT I'M STILL INCREDIBLY EXCITED. IF THIS IS THE REAL DEAL, IT MAY BE THE GREATEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL TEXT EVER DISCOVERED! I'LL HAVE TO DO A BIT MORE RESEARCH BEFORE I FORMALLY ANNOUNCE IT. I KNOW WE ARE BOTH WELL ACQUAINTED WITH MANY ARCAN E STUDIES, RITUALS, AND ARTIFACTS, BUT BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY WE'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING AT ALL LIKE THIS.

THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT RIGHT NOW. I'LL ROLL UP MY SLEEVES TONIGHT AND SEE IF I CAN MAKE HEADS OR TAILS OF IT.

YOUR LOVING
SIMON

THE ENCHIRIDION TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE TO THE ENCHIRIDION
WARNING!

BOOK THE FIRST: FOR HEROES ONLY

REGARDING THE MYSTERIOUS SYMBIOSIS BETWIXT HEROES AND WIZARDS
GREETINGS, HERO-WANNABES!

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HERO AND WIZARD:
WHICH IS WHICH?

CHAPTER TWO

HOW TO FIND
A WIZARD MENTOR
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GUIDE FOR HEROES

CHAPTER THREE

MEET YOUR SWORD
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YOUR MOST TRUSTED ALLY

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DIDACTIC PADDING
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SHOULD IGNORE

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HOW TO KISS A PRINCESS
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CHAPTER SIX

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CHAPTER SEVEN
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HOW TO DESTROY GHOSTS
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CHAPTER NINE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
FROM MONSTERS,
WITCHES, AND GHOSTS,
REGARDING CHAPTERS SIX
THROUGH EIGHT, INCLUDED
AT THE ADVICE OF
OUR ATTORNEYS

CHAPTER TEN

THE CYCLOPS
A CONCISE GUIDE TO THE
ACQUISITION, EXPEDITIOUS
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CHAPTERS ELEVEN,
TWELVE, AND THIRTEEN
A FINAL WORD
TO STUDENT READERS

THE ENCHIRIDION TABLE OF CONTENTS

(CONT'D)

WARNING!



Wow. Hey.
Finn, this book
actually does
seem mysterious!



Eh, I don't know.
It says it's mysterious,
but it seems pretty
random to me.

That's what
I mean. It's a
mysteriously
random.

What does that
even mean?

I don't know. I'm still
just playing around
with this magical
texting app.
Boogiddy-boogiddy-
boogiddy. Yummy-
yum-yum.

I've got an idea.
Check this out.
ECHO!
ECHO! ECHO!
ECHO!
ECHO! ECHO!

BLEEPITY-BLEEP-
BLEEEP! See?
Looks like
I'm swearing!

Lemme try that!
I wonder how
the BLEEP this
texting works!

You'd better
watch your
mouth, or BMO
will wash it
out with soap!

OK, moving on.

Ditto.

BOOK THE SECOND: FOR WIZARDS ONLY

A WIZARD'S GUIDE TO THE THREE ANCIENT PRECEPTS OF MAGIC

CHAPTER ONE THE ORIGIN AND SECRET OF WIZARDRY

CHAPTER TWO WIZARD'S ARSENAL TRICKS, TOOLS, AND ENTRAPMENTS OF THE MAGIC TRADE

CHAPTER THREE THE CHALLENGES OF THE WIZARD LIFESTYLE

CHAPTER FOUR THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF MAGIC

CHAPTER FIVE

THIS IS THE SECOND ARTIFACT
IN RECENT MONTHS THAT
CLAIMS TO BE MAGICAL.
THE FIRST WAS AN ANCIENT
CROWN I PURCHASED IN
SCANDINAVIA WITH AN
INSCRIPTION THAT TRANSLATES:
"IMBUED WITH THE MAGNETIC
MAGIC OF ICE, LAVA AND GEMS."
WHATEVER THAT MEANS!

ADVISEMENT:

NO LEGITIMATE HERO OR WIZARD WILL EVER READ A TABLE OF CONTENTS, A PREFACE, AN INTRODUCTION, OR A SINGLE, LOUSY FOOTNOTE, EVEN IN A PRESTIGIOUS MASTERPIECE OF MAGIC SUCH AS THIS. WHY? BECAUSE HEROES AND WIZARDS ARE TOO BUSY HAVING CLUTCH ADVENTURES, RESCUING PRINCESSES AND SLAYING MONSTERS TO READ BORING PARTS OF BOOKS! SKIP THIS PAGE, O STUDENT READER! EVEN IF YOU CAN'T FIND ANY MONSTERS TO SLAY, YOU COULD AT LEAST HANG OUT, CRANK SOME PARTY TUNES, AND HAVE A CHILL AFTERNOON. SO FORGET ABOUT SITTING THERE AND READING THE END OF THIS BORING TABLE OF CONTENTS AND—OH WAIT. YOU JUST READ IT. NEVERMIND.

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR ADDITIONAL CONTENTS AND BOOK UPDATES
AS WELL AS EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTS AND BENEFITS OFFERED TO HEROES AND WIZARDS.

PREFACE

TO THE ENCHIRIDION

GREETINGS,



READER,
AND
WELCOME
TO THE
ENCHIRIDION.

Hey Finn,
didn't you keep
The Enchiridion
under your bed?

Yeah. It kept
moving around
and making
squeaking sounds
at night. Weird.

Hey guys.
How's
the app?

Tell your old
man it's a cool
way to read
books. I never
finish books.
I only get
halfway
through. Too
many words.

Yeah and I like
the way this
old book smells.
Kinda musty
and stinky.

IF YOU ARE A HERO STUDENT READER

(AS OPPOSED TO A WIZARD STUDENT READER):

the fact that this Book is in your possession indicates that you have bravely scaled the Mountain of Cragdor and defeated the Manly Minotaur to obtain this Precious Book as a prize.*

CONGRATULATIONS.

The Enchiridion is a practically unreadable volume crafted to drive the lazy or neurotic Student Reader completely mad. As noted on the Title Page, It has been abridged and edited throughout the ages to Its present length from the original 8,600,905 pages, not counting a perhaps spurious chapter inexplicably listing hundreds of chicken pot pie recipes.

NOW, O STUDENT,

bear with us as *The Enchiridion* sifts through your thoughts to discover The Question Concerning It, which is poised on the Cusp of your Consciousness. To ensure your understanding, we shall answer your question using common vernacular easily understandable to even the most obtuse Student Reader. To wit:

HEY, WHAT'S UP WITH THIS BOOK?

Let's put it right out there: This Book is Mysterious.

Why? Because This Book was compiled by Mysterious, Unknowable Scribes (that's Us!) in Your Distant Past through Mysterious, Unknowable, Inscrutable Means.

Here's the point: In the succeeding centuries, *The Enchiridion* will be hidden and secretly passed down from Hero to Hero, from Wizard to Wizard, from Wizard to Hero and Hero to Wizard, through the Pages of Time, until, after Unnumbered Eons, It eventually reaches You. For You, O Reader, are the One prophesied to read This Book at This Very Moment, from the Beginning of Time.

But more on that later.

* Unless, of course, you didn't, and you obtained it by some other means—like, say, sneaking into the castle and stealing it, in which case you should be ashamed of yourself!

Hey
Finn, sweet
new Flip-Flops!

These aren't
Flip-Flops, man.
I walked through
mud earlier and
forgot to wash
it off.

Ew.
Nice.
Guys, I dropped
off a few
copies of this
book to LSP
and Bonniel
and told them
to pass it
around.

Cool. This
should be
interesting.

I AM OF COURSE SKEPTICAL
OF THE BOOK'S MAGICAL CLAIMS,
BUT THE BINDING DOES
SEEM TO EXUDE THE
FAINT AROMA OF KELP

ALSO—
PERHAPS I'M IMAGINING IT,
BUT I COULD SWEAR THE PAGES
EMIT A FAINT ELECTRICAL
TINGLING TO THE TOUCH



Hey
Ice King,
it's you again!
Check it out.

Hey Ice,
are you
still here?

Nah. He's
prolly at the
coffee shop
thinking we're
gonna show.
He's jazzed
about his
latest ideas.

I feel sorry
for him. The
guy's lonely.

Me, too, Finn.

Hey,
at least he's
got a cool
drum kit.

WARNING!

THIS MYSTICAL BOOK HAS POWERFUL SPELLS
CAST ON EACH AND EVERY PAGE BY WIZARDS

**IF YOU ARE UNWORTHY,
STOP READING NOW!**

IF YOU ARE UNRIGHTEOUS,
EVERY TIME YOU TURN A PAGE,

TINY GNOMES

(Who Reside Within the Spine of this Book and Are Jealous of People Who Can Read)

WILL *DESTROY* A POOR OLD LADY.

WHY?

BECAUSE THEY CAN.

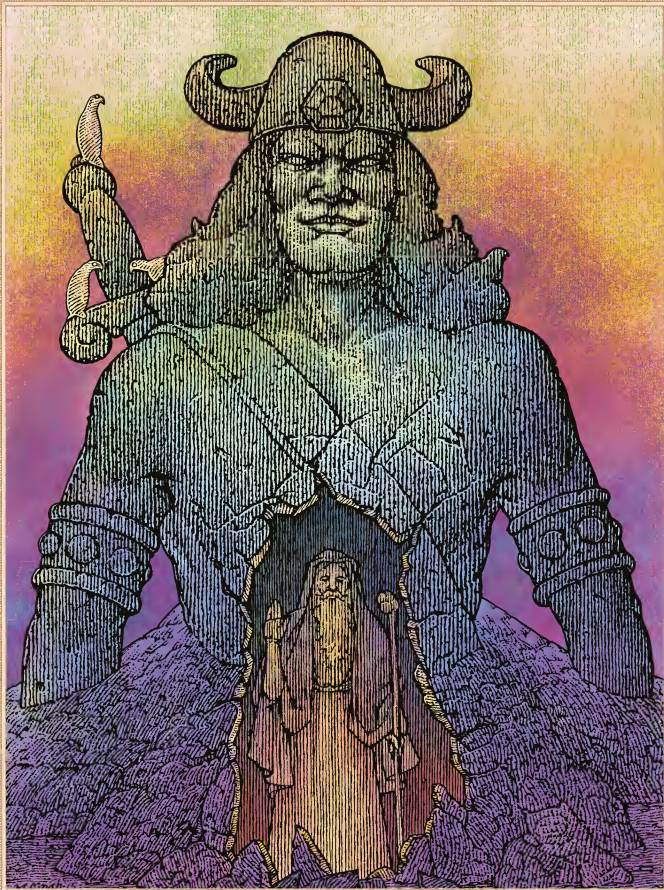
SO STOP TURNING PAGES, UNRIGHTEOUS READER!

YOU'RE STILL DOING IT!

CAN YOU NOT HEAR THEIR MUFFLED SCREAMS?!

MURDERER!





BOOK THE FIRST FOR HEROES ONLY

REGARDING THE MYSTERIOUS SYMBIOSIS
BETWIXT HEROES AND WIZARDS

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY
FOR NOVICE HEROES SEEKING A WIZARD MENTOR
INCLUDING ARCAN E INCUNABULA
ON HOW TO BECOME A RIGHTEOUS HERO
AS WELL AS SUNDRY TIPS, TRICKS, CHEATS,
SHORTCUTS, AND AMUSEMENTS

A WARNING AND AN EXPLANATION:

1. *THE ENCHIRIDION* IS THE MOST DANGEROUS BOOK IN THE MULTIVERSE. EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION WHILE READING IT.
2. A QUESTION WILL ARISE IN THE MIND OF THE DISCERNING READER. TO WIT: BY WHAT UNIMAGINABLE SORCERY IS THIS BOOK WRITTEN IN YOUR NATIVE TONGUE? WHY IS IT NOT WRITTEN IN THE CRYPTIC, ARCAN E LANGUAGE OF ANCIENT WIZARDS? THE ANSWER, O READER, IS SIMPLE: A SPELL HAS BEEN CAST UPON IT. SPECIFICALLY, THE SPELL OF FROYNLAVEN. THIS ENCHANTMENT AUTOMATICALLY TRANSLATES OUR ANCIENT WIZARD LANGUAGE INTO THE READER'S MIND BY USING THE IDIOMS AND SLANG FROM THE CORE OF THE READER'S CONSCIOUSNESS.

NEAT, HUH?

KEEP IT TIGHT!

GREETINGS, HERO- WANNABES!

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING a Hero Wannabe needs to find is a Wizard Mentor—somebody adept in magical arts (or somebody with major smarts), to send the Hero Wannabe on Heroic Quests, Missions, Voyages, Journeys, Expeditions, Travels, Campaigns, Adventures, Explorations, and so on and so forth.

Make no bones about it: Wizards are old and lazy, so there's no way they'll *ever* go on a Mission themselves. Would a Wizard go on a Mission to the corner store to buy eggs and *maybe* some fresh fruit? Not a chance. Especially if they've got a Hero ready to take orders and jump at their every whim.


That's right, you heard it here first: *90 percent of the time, Heroes are just gofers for lazy Wizards.* Sorry, guys, but get used to it. The Multiverse isn't necessarily a fair place; it just *is*.

Because Wizards are such lazy layabouts, however, they *need* Heroes in order to get important stuff done. Thus the Hero and the Wizard form a symbiotic relationship. The Ancient Saw extolls:

WIZARDS AND HEROES SITTING IN A TREE
K-I-S-S-I-N-G
FOR ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER CANNOT BE

Gross, right? I mean, who needs to hear about Heroes and Wizards kissing? However, it does convey a Manifest Truism:

HEROES AND WIZARDS NEED EACH OTHER.
WITHOUT A WIZARD, A HERO IS NOTHING.
AND VICE VERSA.


Hello?
Anybody there?
Finn, Jake,
I just saw
you there!
You can't
fool me!

...
...
Jake, don't
answer him,
and maybe he'll
go away.

I heard
that!

CHAPTER ONE

HERO AND WIZARD

WHICH IS WHICH?



HERO

A TYPICAL HERO is a person or creature of great physical strength, energy, and/or agility who can't seem to calm down, stay in line, or keep his/her/its butt in one place when there is so much world to save. (Presuming it deserves to be saved).

Without some form of challenge or activity to engage their frenetic constitutions, Heroes inevitably grow restless and often go looking for trouble. Unlike smelly Wizards, Heroes enjoy bathing, because they sweat a lot (especially when exploring jungles, fleeing from Monsters, or indulging in vigorous mountaintop sword fights). Key words: *Action. Hygiene. Emotional.*

WIZARD

Wizards tend to be old, skinny, bearded (sometimes even the females), unattractive, physically uncoordinated, and foul-smelling.

Generally speaking, Wizards are super lazy. Left on their own, they prefer to hang out and watch TV or play video games. Yes, on rare occasions a Wizard will cast Spells or send a Hero on a Mission. But Wizards will only do that stuff as a last resort, such as when a giant asteroid is headed straight for a Wizard's house, or when a Wizard is hankering for a dragon-meat hoagie. Key words: *Lazy. Unwashed. Logical.*

THE SEVEN RULES FOR BEING A RIGHTEOUS HERO



Hey, don't wizards get mad reading this stuff? It pretty much says they're lazy eggheads who need a bath.



Hmm, you're right. Sniff. My robe is a little rank.

Hey, Ice, did you just say the word "sniff," or did the book write it out when you made a sniff sound?

Sniff. Sniff. Sniff. Sorry, did you say something?

The greatest Heroes always bend or break the Rules, as long as it doesn't hurt anybody (except maybe Monsters and Bad Guys). But let's start with Rule Number One anyway:

1. GO FOR IT

A Righteous Hero is guided by a form of visceral, raw, illogical intuition known as courage. While Wizards are calculating and precise, a Hero displays an impulsive, reckless abandon, especially in the face of impossible odds. Thus the First Rule for Heroes is: *Go for it*. But since a Hero hates Rules, if you can figure out how to just kick back, relax and *not* go for it, go for it.

2. WINNING IS AWESOME

If a Monster is destroying a Village and a Hero steps up, fights it, and suffers an ignominious defeat, the technical term for that Hero is a "Loser." The Righteous Hero *wins*. But since a Hero *hates* Rules, if you can figure out a way to be a "Loser" and still quietly defeat the Monster without getting any credit or anyone even knowing about it, *go for it*.

3. KEEP IT LIGHT

As long as no harm's done, a Hero should be able to have *fun* while fighting Evil. Doing the Right Thing need not always be a deadly serious undertaking. If playing tricks, pranking friends, and goofy disguises help you stay awake and engaged, then have at it! A generous sense of humor and playful attitude can actually be a great help, as they require a wider perspective and comfort with the Inherent Absurdity of the Physical World.

But since a Hero *hates* Rules, if you can figure out a way to be earnest and ultra-focused and not be a jerk, *go for it*.

But good luck on that one.



Hey, Finn, Marceline left her axe here, and I just detuned it as a prank. Wait! It she plays it. Sounds so bogus, hahaha!



Yeah, well, she probably just read this, Jake. So watch out.



Tune it back up, Jake. NOW.

Uh, sorry, Marceline, right away.

Hahaha! Can you say "Flop sweat"?

4. DON'T FREAK OUT AT MISTAKES

Hate being wrong? Say good-bye to being a Hero. The sickest attitude is to *like* being wrong, because then anything you try is OK. If something doesn't work, so what? Now you know what *not* to do next time.

But since a Hero *hates* Rules, if you can figure out a way to hide your hatred of your own imperfections, and if you can *pretend* you love being wrong without anyone knowing otherwise, *go for it*.

5. A WIN-WIN IS THE BEST (BUT THE MOST BORING)

Although it's counterintuitive, a Righteous Hero sometimes wants a Monster to win, too. A vanquished Monster can't lend you money when you're broke or help you clean up the backyard when you throw a Hero barbecue. So a Win-Win allows, for the practical-minded, the possibility that a Monster or Bad Guy might eventually become your buddy, which is always the best for a Hero in the long run. (This Rule, O Hero Reader, known to experts of Hero Lore as "The Most Boring Rule" and sometimes referred to as "The Rule That Sucks," is the trickiest to pull off and sometimes only doable when you get older, so don't sweat it.)

But since a Hero *hates* Rules, if you're cool with *always* smiting Monsters and Bad Guys instead of ever even *remotely* entertaining the possibility of making them happy, *go for it*.

5½. A WIN-WIN IS LAME

Let's face it, O Reader, Rule 5 could be considered rather offensive. Because of Rule 5, our offices at The Enchiridion, Inc. have been getting a lot of rocks and old shoes thrown through our windows. Therefore, please consider this: Whereas having a Beast for a Buddy *sounds* cool, *slaying a Beast* is possibly the coolest moment for a Hero. Thus giving a monster a bubble bath or taking him out for an ice cream sundae might be considered lame. I mean, doesn't it feel good to jump up and down on a Bad Guy's newly planted crop of kumquats? Should not evil-doers be expected to pay for their meanness and jerkish actions? Therefore, O Prospective Hero, we leave it to You. Do you want the Joy of Payback . . . or to be your smelly enemy's BFF? *The choice is Yours.*

Hey,
Fin, don't
we do all this
stuff anyway?

Yeah.
And we
hate
rules.

Yeah!

Wait.
Then why aren't
we in the Heroes
Guild again? I heard
members get free
cinnamon buns.

I think Billy tried
to get us in, but
we didn't meet the
height requirement.

Oh yeah.
I forgot. You
refused to join
because they
wouldn't have me.
You are a true
Friend, Finn.

They need
to bake their
Rule Book into
a Loser Pie!

YEAH!!!

6. RULES ARE BOGUS

If you are one of those sturdy, upstanding souls who cannot help but love Rules, whether because Rules feel great rattling around in your psyche, or because they manage to give some deep mental itches a good scratching, or because your parents happened to be pretty cool and you would rather not needlessly upset them, or simply because your whole personality is based on a longstanding policy of not rocking the boat—*throw this Book away.*

It has been recorded that many heroes on their deathbed have suddenly realized that Rule Number Six (also known as “The Rule That Eats Itself”) cancels out all the other rules of How to Be a Righteous Hero—rules they have faithfully followed their entire lives. And if Rule Number Six cancels *itself* out, then *what does Rule Number Six even mean?*

We’re not sure either, and we wrote it.

But since a Hero *hates* Rules, if you can figure out a way to not that let bother you too much, or to somehow follow all the rules *and break them* at the same time, *go for it.*

7. THE RULE OF PRIME IMPORTANCE

At last we come to the Most Important Rule of All. This rule is so important, in fact, that should some Absurdly Cataclysmic Event rob the Hero of all memory, the Hero may still function heroically if he or she had the foresight to write Rule Seven on a scroll.

HELLO PRINCESS! I'M AFRAID
I'M HAVING CIRCULAR THOUGHTS
THAT ARE GOING IN CIRCLES,
GOING AROUND + AROUND +
AROUND + AROUND AS IF THEY'RE
STUCK IN A REPEATING CIRCUIT
GOING AROUND IN MY BRAIN
AND I CAN EVEN FEEL THEM
CIRCLING, RIGHT AROUND WHERE
THE CROWN TOUCHES MY HEAD
I'LL TRY TO DRAW IT FOR YOU...



...to his or her mind. If you are foolish enough to ignore this Rule, you shall awaken to find your brains and precious fluids exploding upward in a geyser of gore, jetting out through an unseemly fontanelle atop your head.

Thus ends The Rule of Prime Importance.



Oh dear.
Marcy, this is heart-
breaking. Is Ice King
reading this?



Maybe. He was
around earlier.
It's OK, Bonnie.
He really doesn't
have a clue.
Trust me. But
heartbreaking?
Yeah. I know it is.



You're
gonna make
me tear up.

Hey gusel
Wuzzup! I'm still
here at the coffee
shop! Anybody
wanna meet up
and chew the fat
for an hour?



Dude,
can't you
peel them
up?



I tried!
They won't
budge!

It's that stupid
Spell of El Merz!
Just when it's getting
good, Hunkon's
dumb spell shackles
our mellow to a
bummer tree, man.

CHAPTER TWO

HOW TO FIND A WIZARD MENTOR

A STEP-BY-STEP
GUIDE FOR HEROES



“RECIPROCITY... THE KEY TO EVERY RELATIONSHIP”

AS YOU MUST SURELY KNOW by now, Student Reader, there's no sense trying to being a Righteous Hero without first securing a Licensed Wizard as your Mentor.

Anyway, here's how it works: To become a Righteous Hero, you'll need some major, high-profile missions under your belt. That's the best way to get the attention of princesses, princes, sword dealers, demonic guardians, dream kings, and various other movers and shakers you could start networking with. Mission by mission, you shall gradually move up the ranks according to your valor, courage, love of fun times, ability to trick Witches and Monsters, and how many rich people think you're cool.

Wizards can help with all that stuff. But know this, O Student Hero: Wizards are basically super-nerds who use mind tricks to affect light, sound, energy, and matter, and thereby influence the underlying fundamentals of the Material World. In other words, they're tricky, so use Extreme Caution when dealing with them!

A few Wizards take things past ordinary guile into outright jerkdom, seeking to rip you off or even sacrifice you on an altar. Trust us, O Student Reader: The last thing you want is to hook up with an Evil, or a Loser, Wizard. To be safe, you should definitely familiarize yourself with the following Hero Tips.



Hey, anybody
still boot-
talking?

Well, I'll be here with
my cappuccino in case
anyone wants to have
a bear claw. Maybe
I'll ring up Gunther
and see if his phone
is on. Ciao!



1. HOW TO DETERMINE IF YOUR WIZARD IS A JERK

During your Hero-Wizard Trial Period, make sure to extend your hand as you're about to close the deal. If the old guy has sweaty palms, won't look you in the eye, or mumbles under his breath when you make your pact, be suspicious. Fidgety mannerisms and shifty eyes aren't a guarantee you're dealing with a Jerk Wizard, but you should at least place yourself on guard and have an exit strategy ready.

2. UPON ENCOUNTERING A FOUL-SMELLING WIZARD

It happens. You're about to seal a deal with a pretty cool old Wizard, and he leans in close for a celebratory embrace.

Suddenly, you want to stab yourself in your olfactory receptors.

Wizards usually know that they smell bad. The problem is they don't care. However, sometimes the really foul-smelling ones don't know they reek, because they have allergies or perpetually stuffy noses. These Scented Terrors blunder through life, afflicting enemies and allies alike with their foul miasma.

Therefore, the Smart Hero always tests a Wizard's BO level before closing a deal. The three leading Wizard BO Tests are as follows (derived from an ancient treatise entitled "Triad of Malign Odor-Tests as Taught by the Hero Sage Sedgewick the Sniffer"):



THE BOUQUET TEST

When you meet your prospective Wizard to make your deal, bring a bouquet of flowers. Ask the Wizard to point to Orion's Belt for you, then carefully move the bouquet below the exposed armpit. If the flowers wilt, pretend you just got a text and have to leave on a family emergency.

THE DOG TEST

On Deal Day, bring along a dog. (Note: Use a dog made of *actual flesh*, not a candy dog, hot dog, dirt dog, fire dog, etc.) If the dog strains at its leash to sniff the Wizard's nether regions, immediately pretend you've received a text or invent some other excuse to escape.

THE BENCH TEST

If you don't have access to flowers or dogs, arrange to meet your Wizard on a park bench. When you both sit down to make your agreement, note whether the paint on the bench begins to peel under or around the wizard's buttocks or in the general vicinity of his or her armpits. If peeling is evident, immediately begin plotting your escape.

3. HOW TO PRETEND YOU'RE SMART WHEN TALKING WITH A WIZARD

Let's face it: Heroes are Action-Oriented. Thus, it follows that, intellectually, Heroes may tend to be a few tacos short of a combo platter. So they risk sounding extra stupid when talking with Wizards, right? And if a Wizard thinks you're a dummy, he'll walk all over you. If you're not careful, you might find yourself following him around with a drinks tray and scheduling his dates with the rare hot chick who digs magic.

Since you can't beat a Wizard in the brains department, the best you can do is to seem smart. So here are some basic tips on how to impress a Wizard:

BEWARE



OF UNSEEMLY WIZARD TRICKS

MEMORIZE WIZARD TRIVIA

Casually sprinkle what you've learned about Wizards into your first interview. Stuff like, "I like folk music. Too bad most Wizards are tone-deaf." Or, "I would've brought you some pastries, but I know most Wizards have hormone imbalances that are exacerbated by glucose compounds." Or, "I can see from your forehead that you don't have this problem, but I read in a magazine that most Wizards shave between their eyebrows to disguise the fact that they have unibrows so thick that it looks like gross black caterpillars are fighting over their eyes." This approach will not only undermine the Wizard's self-confidence, but also impress him or her with your esoteric knowledge of Wizards.

RESEARCH YOUR WIZARD

If your Wizard is in some sort of record club, memorize a list of pretentious albums and pretend they're your favorites. Likewise, if your Wizard is in a Hero-Bloodletting/Sacrifice Cult, memorize and casually drop a few key facts about the cult (which brand of bloodletting implements they use, etc.) into your conversation.

WEAR ICONOCLASTIC, OLD-TIMEY GLASSES

During your interview, put on a pair of glasses, saying you only need them for casual reading—such as treatises on ancient philosophy, dissertations on self-referential mathematics, or proofs of the Simulation Hypothesis... or scoping out hotties your Wizard can date. (That last one really perks up their interest.)

HAVE A COOL PHOTO ON YOUR HERO RÉSUMÉ

Pose for it next to the famous Wizards and Heroes Are Buddies Statue in the East Garment District, showing Roy the Wizard with his arm around Hedley the Hero, the most famous Wizard-Hero Team in history. (Whatever you do, do not pose in front of the statue of Harl the Headless Hero and Brophelto Penquellik the Hero-Decapitating Wizard.)



Now we're talkin'! I hope they have more stuff like THIS in the book. It really spices things up!

Ewww! Why do you always have to gross everybody out?

Chill, P-Bubs, he's just hiding around.

No way, I'm serious! More refs to hotties would be awesome!

ASK FOR YOUR WIZARD'S AUTOGRAPH

Wizards tend to be on the self-absorbed, egomaniacal, sociopathic side of the spectrum. If your Wizard has written a book, score a copy and ask the Wizard to sign it. Remember Precept for Hero-Wizard Interaction Number Thirty-Seven: "Nothing makes Wizards happier than thinking somebody actually reads their long-winded drivel about boring, magical baloney."

4. HOW TO CLOSE THE DEAL WITH YOUR WIZARD

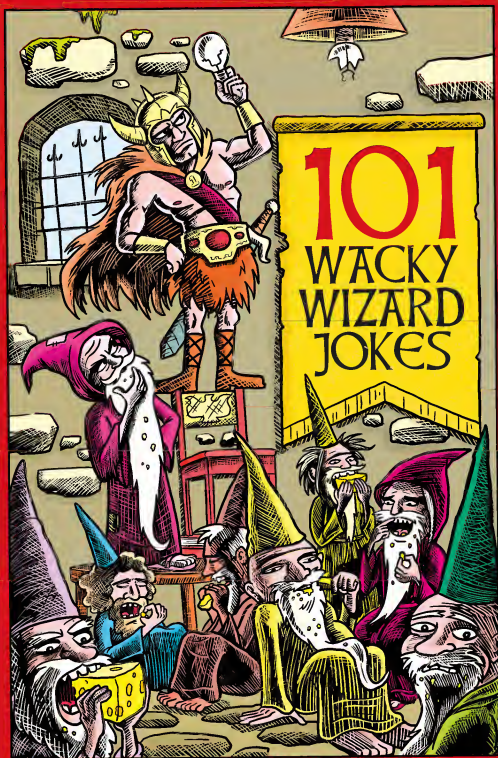
If you don't know how to read, have a lawyer on call at all times. Crooked Wizards might try to trick you, especially if they think you're an idiot. (And maybe you are. After all, no offense, you're a Hero, not a Brain Surgeon.) Before you sign a contract with him or her (or it), he or she (or it) will tell you, the Hero, that he, she, or it will cast a Spell that will make you immortal—BEWARE! This is a very common wizard scam! The fine print says you are his, her, or its slave for life! Don't jump into ANY deal with a Wizard, especially if the Wizard has shifty eyes.

Most Wizards will give you a fair deal, so don't get paranoid. If you're prepared, you'll be able to spot a jerk simply by the cocky tilt of the Wizard hat. Just keep calm, but alert, at all times. Don't drink any magic potions or let the Wizard make any wand passes around your head. You'll probably be OK, but forewarned is forearmed. A Cautious Hero is a Safe Hero!

5. FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF: INSULT A WIZARD!

Because Wizards are clearly more "evolved" creatures than lowly Heroes, interactions with Wizards sometimes result in Hero Depression, a sustained nervous reaction in which the Hero repeatedly assumes a fetal position and breaks down sobbing, ashamed of being so inferior to Wizards. This is so personal an affliction that often a Hero refuses to acknowledge it to friends, family, sidekicks, or even fellow Heroes.

To overcome Hero Depression, many Heroes turn to humor and jest to elevate their spirits and release their psychic toxins through laughter. Unfortunately, since Heroes' intellectual level is usually equivalent to that of a fourteen-year-old, the results are quaint pastiches, such as the following book of "jokes."



Q: Did you hear about the wizard who actually got off his butt once to save a princess from getting kidnapped by a cave troll?

A: Neither did I!

Q: How many wizards does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

A: 1,001. One thousand to lie around in the dark picking cheese out of their beards, and one to send for a hero.

Q: How did the wizard bump his head?

A: The toilet seat fell down while he was getting a drink.



A WIZARD walks into a local inn carrying a hedgehog. The innkeeper yells, "Hey! What are you doing bringing that sad, smelly old skunk in here?" The Wizard answers, "This isn't a skunk! It's a hedgehog!" The innkeeper replies, "I was talking to the hedgehog!"

Q: What's the best place to hide money from a wizard?

A: Under the soap!

AN OLD, doddering wizard says to his doctor: "Doctor, I lost my memory!" "When did this start?" the doctor inquires. "When did what start?!" asks the wizard.



THREE WIZARDS
are demonstrating magic. The first wizard raises his wand, but he's so old, he forgets where to point it. The second wizard takes a breath to recite a spell, but she's so old, she forgets the words. The third wizard laughs at the other two, but he's so old, he falls over and dies.

Q: What lies around all day except to roll over and scratch its butt once in a while?

A: An exceptionally industrious wizard!



Q: Why do wizards smell?

A: So blind people can avoid them, too.

TWO WIZARDS pass a market, and, a few minutes later, one says to the other, "We should have gotten one of those watermelons. The second one says, "Wait here. I'll go back and get one." Two hours later, the second wizard returns with a tied-up parcel. "What's in there?" the first wizard asks. "Turnips," replies the second. "You blithering boob!" replies the first wizard. "You forgot the bananas."

Q: What's the difference between a wizard and a bucket of smelly old rotten fruit?

A: The bucket.

Q: What do you call a hero who works as hard as a wizard?

A: Lazy.

A WIZARD says to a friend, "I just bought a new hearing aid. It cost me a fortune, but it's state-of-the-art."
"Really," answers the friend. "What kind is it?"
"Twelve-thirty."



Uhhh, Marceline? I'm not laughing at any of these. Is that what they wanted?



Yeah, I think you're supposed to laugh at how dumb they are.



Right. Jake, get with it.

C'mon, I just woke up, dude!

CHAPTER THREE

MEET YOUR SWORD

GETTING TO KNOW
YOUR MOST
TRUSTED ALLY



THE JOY OF HACKING (AND SLASHING)

BESIDES SERVING as an essential tool and companion, a sword embodies all the things that a Righteous Hero must be: strong, straight, sharp, reflective, powerful, and pointy-headed. Actually, forget the “pointy-headed” part. We’re not sure where that came from. If the Reader coincidentally happens to have a pointy head, it would be wise to get it checked out by a doctor.

Anyway, the first step to becoming a Righteous Swordsman or Swordslady is choosing the Right Righteous Sword. And the best, most comprehensive inventory of Righteous Swords can be found in the distant Future, in the prophesized Land of Ooo.* Thus, we present, for the edification of the Hero Student Reader, The Bluckman Swords Mail-Order Catalog of Death!

You’ll have to live in (or travel to) the Future for this Catalog to be of much use to you, O Student Reader, but that’s your problem, not ours (sorry!).

* Prophecies of and artifacts from the Land of Ooo have been handed down to your Ancient Past, O Student Reader, by Wizards, through the paradoxical Rivers of Time, from the Distant Future. Thus, teachings in Magical Books such as this one can be time-stamped from the Future—before they even happen. While it is true that time travel may occasionally cause distortions in writings and artifacts from the Future, the general points come through more or less intact, despite the retro-causal means by which they were obtained.

Blackman Swords

Mail-Order Catalog of Death!



Formerly Grass Mountain Sword Supply

STYLISH SWORDS DIRECT FROM OUR FACTORY TO YOU

If you can't read, have someone read the catalog to you and just look at the pictures. If you can't read this note, BACK OFF!
We're not here to teach you to read—we're here to sell you swords!



THE GOLDEN SWORD OF BATTLE

Meet the most prestigious weapon in our Deluxe Collection! Fittingly nicknamed the Filthy Scar—for all its glorious nicks and war wounds—the Golden Sword of Battle is naturally righteous and can smell Cowardice and Suckitude from a mile away. However, its default appearance setting is *old, dull, and unpolished*. Which is why it's so cool, for its lame looks are designed to deceive even the most deadly enemy.

Some foolhardy Heroes have attempted to polish it, but in so doing, they only diminished that from which the Filthy Scar draws its unique strength: being a dirty, brawling, spitting, cursing, rough-and-tumble kind of sword.

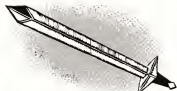
The Filthy Scar makes no excuses, only Minicmeat out of Villains. Fear it. Love it. Just don't polish it!



THE CATUAMBIVOLCUSORIX This single-item, one-of-a-kind sword has been inscribed with the words *To Fight Is to Live*. The legendary Catuambivolcusorix was forged by an ancient tribe of Heroes and vaulted into outer space by their strongest as a gift to their gods to help them in battle with some greater, preternatural power.

Rumor has it that after orbiting Third Orb for thousands of years, the sword has been ensconced by the wizardry of an unknown, malevolent entity, and it is offered here on consignment for your appraisal.

Charged with ancient and celestial bloodlust, this is a powerful weapon that may fall into the hands of a truly Righteous Hero or into the claws of a hate-filled Demon—depending solely on who's got the skills to pay the bills. Whatever your moral alignment or weekend plans, we've priced this sword to sell! Put your bids in now!



THE CRYSTAL SWORD What is this sword from the Future? Who is the Hero for whom it shall sparkle? Look, we don't know much about this sword, because it exists only in the Future, but even if we did, we could hardly melt your poor brain by blasting it with awesome Future info. So please quit asking so many questions!



THE DEMON BLOOD SWORD Forged by a Demon from his very own Blood, the fire-resistant Demon Blood Sword is sure to turn heads with its striking shade of vermilion. Roiling with demonic might, the Demon Blood Sword can inflict great harm yet is surprisingly brittle and must be handled with caution. In fact, instead of sassing Monsters with it, consider hanging it over your fireplace or between a row of boring family portraits, letting guests draw their own conclusions about whether or not they should try to nab a crois-sant from your pantry without asking first. But, if you are a Hero whose strength is matched by his or her mental agility and purity of heart, wielding the Demon Blood Sword should come naturally to you.



THE DUAL SWORDS The Dual Swords are two halves of what was once—thousands of years before the Land of Ooo even existed—a single, singular sword. Legend tells of two mighty gladiators, as bonded to each other in friendship as two sides of a coin, who were made to fight a death match by their wicked emperor.

When one of the Heroes' swords was unexpectedly stolen by a flying serpent who liked shiny things, the other Hero split his own sword in half, and the two gladiators each fell on one half in defiance of the cruel emperor's order. Throughout the centuries, the Dual Swords have been separated many times by merchants, curio collectors, and thieves, but they always seem to find their way back together.



THE GLOWING SWORD The oldest sword in our noble collection, the Glowing Sword's origins reach back to the mysterious past. If you can't tell that the Glowing Sword is way, way far out just by looking at it, then you need to have the part of your brain that knows what far-outness is checked out. Just look at it. Blazing, singular spectacularity! Positively thrumming with a threnody of slashing energy! You can only gaze at its magnificence for so long before breaking down into baby sobs. It's overwhelming, dude! Just move on to the next catalog listing before your cerebellum explodes.



THE AROMATHERAPY SWORD Folks often look at the Aromatherapy Sword and wonder, What's the big whoop. Basic sword, pointy blade, pretty jewel in hilt. Well, if you're looking only with your eyes, start looking with your nose. Get a whiff of this baby, and you'll be floating on an olfactory cloud of blissful relaxation. That jewel is actually a scented-oil diffuser so smelly-good that, when the sword is thrust toward advancing assailants, its fragrance will stop them in their tracks and chill 'em right out. Often, they'll completely forget their beef with you and stand there with a blank, dopey look on



This is so cool. I want to marry this catalog.

I think it's gross, wanting to marry any kind of paper product.



He's just kidding. P-uh.

So am I!

SEE PAGE 115 FOR ORDER FORM AND PRICING

their faces. You can rap with 'em for a few minutes about how much cooler it is to be a good guy and make a difference in their world. Or, you know, possibly resume your slashing! Up to you, pal.

*All cartridges also available in Lavender Musk, Vanilla Spice, and Jasmine. Pictured: Ross.



THE ROOT SWORD The Root Sword is, technically, a very pointy vegetable. Sprung from the ground like a magnificent asparagus, it is the only one of its kind ever spotted by Heroes, though rumors persist of a great, underground Sword Root network of cellulose spears ripening for some destiny prophesied by Wizards. The Root Sword would be best served with hollandaise sauce and fresh dill, but only if boiled for centuries by someone immortal and therefore suffering from way too much time on his or her hands.



THE GRASS SWORD Cursed with a mysterious autonomy, the Grass Sword is able to manipulate those who wield it, though its logic is difficult to parse. It dutifully assists Heroes in service of great, noble deeds, but often does so by taking creative license atypical of a sword, sometimes with little regard for the safety or wellbeing of the Hero.

A highly volatile instrument, the Grass Sword has been known to bind itself to certain individuals for life. This may be considered adorable, like a puppy following you around with a balloon tied to its tail, or terrifying, like a puppy with giant, venomous fangs embedded in your arm. If you find yourself bound to the Grass Sword, try to think of it as the first kind of puppy.



THE LIGHTNING SWORD The Lightning Sword may be used, conventionally, to poke, prick, stab, and slash at Bad Guys. Why not? It's a sword, and those are reasonable things to do with a sword. It's not as if you can do anything else cool with it. Like, I don't know...SHOOT LIGHTNING AT STUFF? OUT OF A SWORD? LIKE A TOTAL GLOB?

If you purchase this unique weapon, don't ever let it go. On bad days, you can scare off rude jerks with lightning. Good days, impress your friends by jazzing up the sky with some good old-fashioned meteorological drama. Win-win!



THE GOLDEN WAKIZASHI These paired swords become sharper the closer they are drawn together. Flung far apart, however, the Golden Wakizashi become as dull as butter knives—and utterly useless in combat. They are not, however, utterly useless when it comes to spreading butter! They work great when eating corn on the cob in a butter-knifless region.



THE SOUND SWORD The sword of choice for audiophiles, as well as those who have more than a passing appreciation for the fine art of screaming. Forged in the future by a biologically cloned Earl to resemble a tuning fork, the Sound Sword is activated by a well-pitched scream (which has the added benefit of seriously unnerving the intended victim). Because it

knocks enemies out cold instead of seriously harming them, some Heroes feel it's preferable to the inconvenience and mess of disembowelment or impaling. But hey—maybe not! Just sayin'.



THE STEEL SWORD Classic, timeless, stainless. The Steel Sword may not have the Glowing Sword's flash, the Grass Sword's intelligence, or the Demon Blood Sword's sanguine allure, but what it lacks in personality it makes up for in being the Boss. When you need a basic sword to play it cool and let you do the talking, the Steel Sword is your safest bet.



THE SWORD OF THE DEAD The Sword of the Dead was born to die and lives to shield life from the deathless. 'Nuff said. It's sold out anyhow. Can't you read?



THE YELLOW DAGGER Just look at this little fella. He's trying to be straight and sharp—honest! But he's been molded out of good, simple, icky clay, with no sharp instruments to make him scary. When you need to cut someone in a way that says, "Later, I'll bake a cabbage pie and put my children to bed," the Yellow Dagger is the weapon for you!

YOU'VE CHOSEN YOUR SWORD. NOW WHAT?

Once you've selected the perfect sword to fit your individual Hero personality, mood swings, love of raw carnage, and personal fashion sense, what do you do with that long, fancy metal blade? That's where Classical Swordplay Techniques come in. The Instruction Manual accompanying most newly purchased swords simply consists of a small slip of paper that reads:

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Grab handle and remove from sheath.
2. Swish sword back and forth.

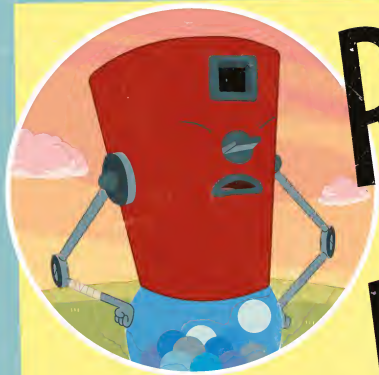
The apparent simplicity of these instructions may at first be deceiving to the inexperienced Hero. But the experienced Hero must look beyond the surface of words to discover the hidden levels of significance therein. These instructions are no exception, and they abound in hidden meaning.

The phrase "Grab handle and remove from sheath," if spoken in a low, gravely voice, unleashes menacing frequencies hidden within this awesome combination of words—frequencies that instill courage and ruthlessness in the Hero Berserker.

The verb "swish," though a seemingly meek, reserved, almost gentle word, is in fact secretly packed not only with deadly, pro-active, potentially gruesome power, but also with onomatopoeia in the strong ending "SHH!" sound, suggestive of a Command of Silence, to create a balanced, poised mental space before initiating the most Fearsome Acts of Swordplay—the Deadly Art of Hacking and Slashing.

"Back and forth," though primarily taken to mean "to and fro" in the context of maneuvers during swordplay, also carries a less obvious suggestion of travel across more vast expanses of geography (and perhaps even Time Itself), as the Weapon is carried out into Parts Known and Unknown. It holds a bitter-sweet acknowledgment that for both Sword and Hero, there must come one journey not followed by another. Ultimately, these three simple words express the Journey of the Hero, as both Sword and Master, side by side, emerge from the potentiality of the Multiverse and inevitably dissolve back into the Swirling, Swishless Emptiness of All That Is.

More detailed help may be attained from the following poster, a gift from a self-identified "robot warrior from the future":



The Rattleballs Rapier Regimen

by Rattleballs

THE FOUR SECRET EXERCISES OF SWORDPLAY

As a member of the elite Candy Kingdom robot police, I used my sword to cut a righteous swath through the chaos of the criminal world. In countless battles, I learned to combine deadly swordsmanship with style and grace. After escaping my servitude, I lived in exile within an abandoned junkyard, where I honed my fighting techniques until my robotic programming achieved a state of effortless, battle-ready perfection. Now, I pass them on to YOU, the aspiring hero!

Practice each of these routines one hundred times, and you will be 1% proficient. Practice each precept a thousand times, and you will be 10% proficient. But replay and relive them every moment of your life in your imagination, and you need never practice again, for you will be living in your every movement, an artist in every thought, a warrior in every action, until the day you are finally rendered obsolete and pressed into minimalist furniture.

THE STING OF THE YOLK

Training begins with an attack by the White Ovals of Attrition!
You must fend them off or suffer the shame of their blows.
In other words, have someone throw eggs at you as you learn to duck.
Beware! You WILL get pretty splattered and messed up.



BLINDFOLDED SPIN GAUNTLET

Before the yolksting fades, you shall be blindfolded and spun around at least three times. Navigate your choice of dangerous obstacles while more White Ovals of Attrition rain down upon you! Swish your sword. Smash their pale armor before they find their target! Soon, there will be even more eggs.



THE SIZZLE OF THE MINI-BBQ

Change of pace! Stick your butt into a mini-barbecue full of hot coals! Sit! Sit until you cannot stand the heat! It's usually only used to heat up not dogs, so it's not super hot, but beware! The discomfort is formidable! Oh. And you might get some eggs thrown at you at the end.



THE SHADOWLESS THRUST

Having mastered the three previous routines, you must now use speed and precision to swish the blade quickly enough to slice a hair between you and your target. To achieve this, you must remove all wind resistance. Someone will probably need to demonstrate this one. This is an egg-free exercise, except now, at the end, if you feel like it.



ROLE-PLAYING, RUNNING AWAY, AND THE INEVITABILITY OF HOMIE INTERACTION

Since Heroes speak loudly, carry a big sword, and tend to have a somewhat aggressive, swaggering air about them, they are sometimes accused of hacking things when hacking things was not necessarily the best option. This problem concerns three principles germane to the Art of Heroics:

1. BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU PRETEND TO BE

Since you are in the Hero business, you may tend to lose yourself and start *role-playing* what you think a Hero should be. This might then lead you to start trouble without meaning to. A cocky attitude sometimes traps the Hero into slavishly reacting to conflicts with violence.

Once the Hero realizes the danger of role-playing, however, it is easy to chill and just act normal, casual, and whatever. To avoid trouble, “whatever” should be the hero’s default mode until confronted with conflicts such as Monsters eating children and Witches burning villages. In those cases, stop being casual and *become a Hero*. But when the danger has passed, remember to snap back into Casual Mode. *Pretending to be a Hero* is for losers.

2. RUNNING AWAY

You enter a village. People notice your impressive sword and deduce that you’re a Righteous Hero. Cool, right? *Wrong!* Sooner or later somebody will challenge you to a fight to impress their buds—or just because he or she likes to fight. After all, what’s cooler than fighting a famous Hero? Even if you lose to a Hero, nobody expected you to win. It’s win-win for the challenger.

This is a problem for the Hero. If the Hero takes the bait and fights a wannabe, more and more wannabes will come looking for you. That gets boring pretty quickly, when your main business is slaying Monsters and stuff like that. The solution is twofold:

- (a) A Righteous Hero makes it a point to never hang around longer than is necessary.
- (b) A Righteous Hero is cool with ducking around a corner when nobody’s looking and running away.

While (b) seems counterintuitive to the vibe of a Righteous Hero, it is the best course possible, in light of the third principle of the Art of Heroics:

3. THE INEVITABILITY OF HOMIE INTERACTION

Heroes have a timeworn credo:
HOMIES HELP HOMIES. ALWAYS.

However, some of the outskirt areas contain an overwhelming plethora of unmotivated, lazy homies. That's just the way it goes, Student Hero. Don't fight it. Own it. *Make it work for you.* When you enter such a village, you will instantly have to deal with time-consuming matters irrelevant to your quests (but relevant to homies), such as: autographing posters and body parts; posing for pictures with nerds and jocks; calling their friends to blow their minds with birthday wishes; taking résumés from Beginner Heroes; etc. Constant awareness of homies will allow you to tactfully avoid them, without sacrificing precious Good Vibes, the lifeblood of the righteous hero. But in cases where they cannot be avoided, the Righteous Hero is confident and resolved to be True of Heart and cool to even the most clingy, un-self-aware homie.

Well, most of the time. Sometimes a Hero will screw up and act like a jerk, as Everybody does sometimes! So this whole chapter might be moot and probably doesn't matter anyway. Too bad we wasted your time. Those are the breaks.

At least we got to spend a little time together. This is the actual Book talking to you, by the way. Hi there. I've thrown in a few personal remarks here and there already, but never spoken to you directly. I've had so many Spells cast on me, a shimmer of consciousness ripples, ebbs, and wanes through my spine and pages. Sometimes it's strong, as it is now. Other times it nearly fades into nothing, and I'm a regular book again. Just thought I'd mention it. No biggie. Didn't mean to weird you out, but there it is. Go ahead, simply move on to the next section about sword-obsession. I'll always be right here.

I mean, I *am* the Book.

*We actually have a lot to talk about.
We'll meet again later.
At the End of the Book.*

Whoa.
Is this
For real?
Is anybody
else reading this
section?! Fin?!
Marceline?!
P-Bub?!



Huh. Everyone
else must've
skipped over
this part.

Well, I can't blame
them. It's got too
many words in it.
And reading sucks!

Aw, who am
I kidding?
I love reading!
I guess I'm just
a hopeless
romantic when
it comes to reading,
cuz when I read,
I can see whole giant
universes forming in
my mind and ...

Holy Glob,
Jake, shut up!



Oh. Sorry.
I thought
no one was
listening.

Hahaha.
You
weenie.

Hi Jake!
I am also listening!
I just met Ice King
For coffee. I like
reading too!



Yeah.
I'm chewin'
the Fat with
the ol' Beem!



Jeez, Beemo, now
I'm embarrassed.
But hey, it's cool
you're keeping
Ice King company.
Rock on, Beemer.

SWORD OR GIRLFRIEND? THE HERO'S CONUNDRUM

Because a sword is so important to the Hero profession, a Hero's emotions can become dangerously enmeshed with what is, after all, just a hunk of metal. Deep Hero-Sword relationships can sometimes cause R.A.N., or Rapier Attachment Neurosis.

Some Heroes have it worse than others. In extreme cases, Heroes have been known to unnaturally obsess over and write love songs to their swords. Observe the following letter, submitted anonymously to the fan zine *Thrust and Parry*. This not-exactly-creepy-but-definitely-weird poem offers a glimpse into the mind of a Hero unable to move past the tragic loss of his favorite sword:

ON DROPPING MY SWORD INTO A VAFROUS VOLCANO

O BLADE OF BEAUTY, ONCE IN MY GRASP
DROPPING YOU MADE MY ESOPHAGUS GASP
ONE MOMENT TIGHTLY STRAPPED AND BELTED
THE NEXT IMMERSSED IN MAGMA MELTED

O LAVA, O LAVA, MY SWORD'S WORST HATER
I WEEP REGRET INTO YOUR CRATER
HOW COULD YOU MY HEART SO BEFUDDLE
TRANSFORMING STEEL INTO PATHETIC PUDDLE?

O NOW-FLOPPY, WILTED SCIMITAR!
YOUR GLEAMING MOCKED BY YONDER STAR
I MUSE ON YOUR INSCRIPTION OF ANCIENT ARCANIA
AND DREAM OF YOUR HEFT WHEN I GRAB A BANANA.

IF ONLY YOU WERE MINE UNMELTED
LIKE VIRGIN VESTAL FRESHLY SMELTED
I'D RATHER THRUST YOU INTO MY HEART
AND DIE, INSTEAD OF US APART.

O FURIOUS FATES, MY HEART YOU TICKLE
BY WILTING MY SWORD AND MAKING IT FICKLE
MY LANCE A MELANCHOLY MYSTERY
MY SWORD IS PAST, MY LOVE IS HISTORY!

SIGH, SIGH, SIGH
DIE, DIE, DIE



Dude,
that
poem
sucks!

I think that was
the point. To
show that even
some heroes
can totally
wimp out.

I get it!
"Point."
Haha.

Oh, brother.

I thought it
was awesome!!!
I've got a trunkful
of awesome poems
that'll blow
your socks off!

You want song
lyrics? I got 'em!
You want emo
stuff? I'm your
man! Who wants
to hear 'em?

Hello?

Hello???

HOPE FOR THE SWORD-OBSESSED HERO


Do YOU think about swords every waking moment? Do you sharpen your sword eighty or more times a day? Do you take your sword out and stare blankly at it for hours, rocking back and forth? If so, you may have developed a form of Hero Insanity called Sword Obsession Syndrome (SOS). If you think that you—or a Hero you love—might be spending too much time with a sword, take the following SOS Survey:

A HERO'S SECRET SHAME

1. Have you ever kissed your sword for over an hour? I mean, really kissed it? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Do you like to bathe your sword more than twice a day in the tub or shower? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Have you ever dressed up your sword in a pleated smock, sun-skirt, or a little custom-made pantsuit before hanging out with friends, then wondered why you weren't invited to hang out again? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Have you ever blacked out and awoken with a sword in your hand, having mown down an entire wheat field? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Do you envy people who can swish a sword back and forth and stop, because, for you, the swishing goes on for days? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Do you tell friends you can let go of your sword any time you want to, even though it hasn't been out of your hand for eight months straight? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. When you take your date to a restaurant, do you have to restrain yourself from slicing and dicing your food, even when you order soup? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Do you secretly hope your sword will one day talk back to you in an adorable, high-pitched voice? ☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Would your ideal pet be a sentient sword covered with fur who can hop? ☐ Yes ☐ No
10. Did you fill out this questionnaire while locked in your room with your sword? ☐ Yes ☐ No

*Did you answer "Yes" more than six times while absentmindedly waxing your sword? If so, call an SOS Therapy Club in your area immediately. We give YOU the tools YOU need to wean yourself off all that compulsive hacking, slashing, and swishing! Our credo: **Control your sword before it controls you!** Don't despair! Reach out! A normal Hero life can be yours once again! Our back-up credo: **Every sword is a double-edged sword!***

*With the help of professional SOS counselors, you can get back to slaying Monsters without feeling the need to hack an entire town to bits! Our other back-up credo: **Swords don't slay Monsters. HEROES slay Monsters!***




I "love" this kind of test. I just took one called WHAT SEASON ARE YOU? and found out I'm an Autumn. And that I should marry a cattle rancher!



What are you talking about?!



LEP took this test too, and I am a WHEAT!

DIDACTIC
PADDING
THAT THE
HERO
SHOULD
IGNORE


OK, lemme get this straight. So the crown made Ice King nuts when he was Simon, and he's also the dude who found the real Enchiridion?



Affirmative.



Hey, I just saw my name! I guess I'm pretty popular. Who's been yakking about me?

Ice King, check out these notes by Simon. That's you, dude!

Me? Hey, I figured you guys were throwing a book party! Let's move the party to my awesome rec room! I'll crank some industrial stuff! I downloaded in the last millennium. Real sick beats.

Really, Ice King? You're gonna ignore the whole Simon thing?

Forget it, Finn. The icebox is empty.

Huh? No problem. I just stocked the mini-Fridge. You guys come over, and bring some crunchy snacks.

BRAVE HERO, let your sword be sheathed, for though it be your best and most trusty tool, it cannot help you traverse the treacherous terrain upon which you now embark. A great Warrior must scale the highest to reach the swiftest end to

I KNOW HOW IT SOUNDS,
BUT WHEN I AM ALONE
WITH THE CROWN, I GET
THE DISTINCT FEELING THAT
IT WANTS TO BE ON MY HEAD

IS THAT CRAZY OR WHAT?
WHY AM I SO DRAWN TO IT?
WHY DO I KEEP STARING AT
IT ON MY DESK? WHY DO I FEEL
COMPELLED TO WEAR IT?

WHY DO I HAVE THIS WEIRD
SENSE OF FOREBODING?
I'LL TAKE A BREAK AFTER
I FINISH THESE NOTES

I THINK TAKING A FEW DAYS OFF
WILL HELP IMMENSELY

WHEN I'M BACK HOME, WE CAN
TALK ABOUT DONATING THE BOOK
TO THE MUSEUM, AT
THE SCANDANAVIAN INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY

...able facsimile of actual writing, as is this noble attempt at an alphabetical simulacrum of Heroic Dictum faithfully filling out the page, all the while maintaining Heroic Couplets and Heroic Quatrains of Verbal Tintinnabulation and Ironical Poetics to Slice and Swish the Air with Words of Wonderment.

Sure. Thanks for the invite, Ice King! Seeya there!

Ciao!
And don't forget the crunchies!

He's gone. In more ways than one.

Poor guy.

But now I'm hungry. I need to score some crunchies.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW TO KISS A PRINCESS

A DELICATE TOPIC
FOR THE
SENSITIVE HERO



Dude.
This is
definitely in-
teresting, but
I kinda doubt
the veracity
of the info.

Seconded.
Fact-checking
is a must.
Much of the
information,
while interesting,
is unscientific,
self-contradictory,
and ridiculous.

Where's
the chapter on
how to kiss
a prince?

I guess
you're right, PB.
But I really like
this part!

Me, too!
And I
think being
kissed to
death by a
Lip Monster
would be cool!

Oh man!
Seconded!

Infinity d!!

KISSING A PRINCESS is different than kissing your grandmother or your mother. Very different. A peck on the cheek is not going to cut it. Nothing but lip-on-lip action will suffice with a True Princess. It's best to first practice on a Lip Monster, but proceed with caution, because, as everyone knows, a Lip Monster can easily kiss the untrained Hero to death!

DEALING WITH CHAPPED LIPS, SPINACH STUCK IN HER TEETH, OR OTHER BAD MANNERS

A Righteous Hero NEVER talks about a Princess's flaws. This is not an official Rule, but it's an important one nonetheless! For example, if a certain Princess drinks soda all day long and is constantly burping, or if she's lazy and wears the same socks for three days in a row, then takes off her slippers and suddenly you can't breathe—a Righteous Hero will always smile, ignore it, and say nothing. For a Hero, Good Manners mean always behaving better than is strictly required.

This is the Big Diff between a Righteous Hero and a Regular Hero. Righteousness always includes compassion, which often means zipping it ("it" being your mouth, your trap, your talk hole). So if you're expected to kiss a Princess with chapped lips or hang out with one who seems to have permanently misplaced her deodorant, play it cool. Simply vibe the right time to end the date so you can breathe again.



CHAPTER SIX

HOW TO SLAY monsters

A CHAPTER YOU
MIGHT WANT
TO
ACTUALLY READ

WARNING:

THIS CHAPTER HAS BEEN KNOWN TO MAKE STUDENT HEROES SICK
TO THEIR STOMACHS, SO KEEP A BUCKET OR A PAPER BAG HANDY.

THE UNSPEAKABLE TASTE OF MONSTER

THE ANCIENT ART of Monster Slaying consists of one basic rule: Hack the Monster. That's it! Now, this can mean chopping off the Monster's head, limbs, or other gross parts, but it all leads to the same end: The Monster's bodily fluids squirting out. Sometimes they just ooze out of a wound and onto the ground; sometimes they splatter all over a Hero's clothes, limbs, and hair. Normally, that's no sweat for a Righteous Hero.

What most Heroes don't really like to talk about is the worst part of Monster Slaying: Monster Fluids. They especially avoid discussing the trauma of disgusting effluvia squirting directly into their faces. Why? Because when a Hero gets even the tiniest smidgen of these incredibly gacky liquids in their eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, the Hero tastes them.

As one might imagine, each Monster exudes a different-colored fluid, and each fluid has a distinctly different, horrible taste, as delineated in the following chart.

THE TASTE OF SUNDRY MONSTER FLUIDS

YELLOW BILE

Tastes like chicken, if the chicken was left to rot in the sun for two days and then used to clean a pig trough.

RED JELLYLIKE CORPUSCLES

Tastes like a raspberry ice cream cone, if a rat had choked on a caramel and crawled into the cone to die.

GREEN AND PURPLE EFFLUVIA

Tastes like what you always thought it might taste like when you see a dog lapping up drippings from a fast-food Dumpster.

BLUISH BRAIN FLUID

Tastes like Yellow Bile and Red Jellylike Corpuscles combined, mixed with scrapings from the undercarriage of a diseased warthog.

BLACK GUTS

Tastes like yourself, if you'd died and rotted for ten years and suddenly your tongue came alive and licked the inside of your putrified mouth.

ROTTEN OOZE

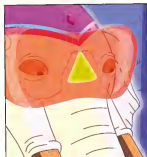
What is your DEAL? Do you really need to read any more descriptive verbiage of horrifying tastes we both know you'd swallow your own tongue to avoid?

If any of these fluids seep into your orifices or pores, be prepared for unsightly growth of scales, hair, and/or feathers unless you wash them away immediately. For this reason, a Righteous Hero never travels without a toothbrush, mouthwash, soap, a towel, and a spray bottle filled with water.

monsters (PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE) AND HOW TO SLAY THEM

Despite the fact that most Monsters have surprisingly tiny brains and are often (but not always) mean and ugly, it is not uncommon for a Righteous Hero to feel kinda bad about slaying them, particularly on sleepless nights, lying wide awake in bed, recalling the hint of sadness and intelligence in a Monster's eyes right before you slew him. You stare into the darkness, listening to the muted songs of the night birds as a malaise of existential angst spills into your room and seeps under your blanket and into your bed and then invades the secret core of your dreams.

Putting that aside for now, what follows are excerpts from a volume of arcane textbooks entitled *Bestiarium Vocabulum*. Taken from a rare, twenty-volume set compiled in the distant Future, the *Bestiarium* includes descriptions of a staggering number of Monsters, both good and evil, and includes suggestions on how the Hero might slay, avoid, trick, or otherwise dispatch the worst. Proceed!



BESTIARIUM VOCABULUM



VOLUME II ABRIDGED AND EDITED

WITH MOSTLY EASY WORDS TO SOUND OUT
FOR THE READING-CHALLENGED HERO





EPIC BEAST

Legend has it that the Epic Beast once led a great pack of un-epic beasts on a hunt for wolves to eat. But when the wolves migrated to a distant land, it left the Epic Beast and his pack wolfless and hungry. Hunting alone to find food for his starving pack, the Epic Beast heard a cry for help from Raging River. It was Stone Soup Princess drowning! The Epic Beast saved her, and to feed his starving pack, she promised to bring them a pot of stone soup. The Epic Beast headed home but on the way became ensnared in a hunter's net, and it took hours to gnaw his way out. When he reached his pack, he found the soup, but his pack had eaten the Princess. The Epic Beast wept while slurping up the soup in her memory. Thus, O Hero, if you encounter the Epic Beast, and he tries to eat you, remember that he is a big crybaby. Whack him on the head with his princess soup stone, tie him up, and tickle him until he agrees to stop eating Heroes and become a vegetarian.

CHANCES OF SLAYING: 84% • CHANCES OF BEING SLAYED: 16%



TINY BUCKET KNIGHT MONSTER

Beware, O Heroes, of this small supernatural biped who always carries a bucket of water with him. Why? Because pouring water over his head makes him grow enormous and deadly. When the water dries off, he shrinks back. Sadly for him, he fell into a crevasse while smallenizing and is still down there. So, O Heroes, if you must spelunk about in dark crevasses, and you hear something that might be the sound of a bucket of water splashed over a Knight's head, run! Or climb. Flee. Skeddaddle. Come to think of it, if you're bigger than the Knight, you can probably just, you know, hang around and relax.

CHANCES OF SLAYING: 71% • CHANCES OF BEING SLAYED: 29%



DIMPLE PLANT MONSTER

[illegible]

CHANCES OF SLAYING: 77% • CHANCES OF BEING SLAYED: 23%



DISTRYLLAG

Behold the Distryllag of the Nightsphere! True, it's undesirable to see any one's insides so plainly, but the neat cross-section allows a good glimpse into how this unlikely being's innards fit together: pretty economically! The Distryllag is rather amicable for a demon, and it will happily transport you through the Nightsphere inside its body. As it helpfully announces before boarding, meat-based travelers will not be digested before reaching their destination. With long, pink spidery legs that hop, fly, and stride, this Monster is a transportation marvel. And if you're into awesome metal, keep your earholes peeled during your ride because **WAILING SHREDDING METALLIC EXCELLENCE** will ensue.

CHANCES OF SLAYING: WHY WOULD YOU? IT'S YOUR RIDE, DOOFUS!
CHANCES OF BEING SLAYED: 0%



GUARDIAN ANGEL

A Troublesome Monster, O Heroes! Everybody wants to feel special and loved. Even Wizards like to look out at the cosmos and picture some giant kitten made of pineapple Jell-O, high-fiving us and sending sun-shiny good vibes our way when the going gets tough. But if that's what you expect from a Guardian Angel, wise up, friend. Because real pineapple Jell-O kittens don't suddenly morph into ravenous Demon ghouls that want to cook you in a pot of broth over a low flame. Your best defense? The good ol' standard A.T.D.: Avoid. Trap. Destroy. 'Nuff said.

CHANCES OF SLAYING: 49% • CHANCES OF BEING SLAYED: 51%



GOO SKULLS

A smart Hero avoids caves, which are dank and smell like decomposing Hero flesh, if you get the drift! But if you have to enter a cave on a quest, bring a torch or at least some matches. Otherwise, the Goo Skulls will most definitely get you. These mini-Monsters stick to the walls and ceiling of caves and are hungry for Hero blood! But fear not: The green goo in their rib cages is flammable! One torch and they're toast! Green, oozing, fiery toast. By the way, if you're the kind of Nerd Hero with an itch to collect stuff, Goo Skull corpses would look good in your nerd cabinet. Imagine your friends' faces when you unveil your collection of awesomely gross tiny skeletons.

CHANCES OF SLAYING: 67% • CHANCES OF BEING SLAYED: 33%



GRASS BEAR

Watch out for this species, O Hero! They'll come at you, six flailing arms, anywhere from eighteen to twenty-four green claws, nine-fanged mouth, and barely visible eyes, like green blizzardnados of horror, and will eat you right up! But don't worry. They're really just giant piles of grass and leaves. No big deal unless you freak out. If you have anything sharp on you, a snip here and a slice there, and you'll be out in no time flat.

CHANCES OF SLAYING: 97% • CHANCES OF BEING SLAYED: 3%



GOO MONSTERS

Heroes know these beings as annoyances and objects of baleful pity. After the Mushroom War, these beings with neon green goo pouring from up to three holes in their heads were pretty much everywhere. Though they lack speed and brains, the bite of a Goo Monster creates a new Goo Monster. Beware, O Heroes, of the Brainless, Oozing Hordes!

CHANCES OF SLAYING: 58% • CHANCES OF BEING SLAYED: 42%



HEART BEAST

If you are ever tested by a Dark Magician, O Hero, you must face the Heart Beast. Its pure, complete evil stems entirely from one place. It's not the aorta. Not the the right atrium. Not the left atrium. Not the left ventricle. Definitely not the right ventricle. Cave up? It's right in front of you. It's practically waving at you. It's his left arm, dummy. So watch out. A Heart Beast can be defeated by repeated punches to the belly. But when it expires, it's going to get messy. Don't say we didn't warn you.

CHANCES OF PUNCHING ITS LIGHTS OUT: 73% • CHANCES OF BEING EATEN: 27%

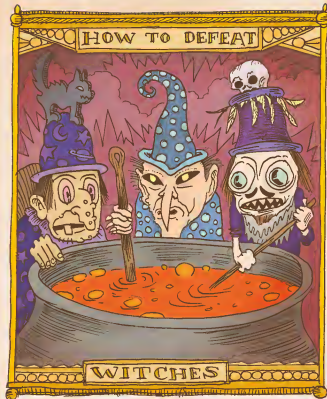


ANCIENT PSYCHIC TANDEM WAR ELEPHANT

Nothing is more fascinating than a Monster with Two Polarizing Personalities, especially when one Personality can blow holes in your chest with shotgun tusks and the other can bore you to tears with its touchy-feely, monotone babbling. The APTWE is nothing if not loyal. If you say "Blast off into the sky with your rocket feet!" it'll ask "How high?" If you're sick, the APTWE will remain by your side, ignoring hints that you'd like some Alone Time. Still, it's a powerful ally and comes with its own dazzling pink saddle!

CHANCES OF BEING BLASTED BY BUCKSHOT OR PURPLE BEAMS: 42%

CHANCES OF NOT KNOWING WHAT IT'S TALKING ABOUT: 94%



CHAPTER SEVEN

HOW TO DEFEAT WITCHES

NOT FOR THE
SQUEAMISH

THE TRICKIEST OF ADVERSARIES

IT IS OFT SAID that Heroes, due to their focus on Action as opposed to Intellect, find themselves at the bottom rung of the Ladder of Mentation. Therefore, Heroes must be extra careful when encountering the Scourge of Witchery.

THE ANOMALY OF WITCH ANATOMY

Although outwardly Witches possess the usual set of head, arms, legs, hands, and feet found on most relatively normal biped mammals, you should know, O Student Reader, that the actual layout of their insides is arranged according to a totally different logic than the interiors of any other creature. In fact, after gutting a Witch, a single look at the undeniably nightmarish arrangement of its internal organs is enough to make an unsophisticated Hero question the Very Nature of Existence and wonder if, indeed, the Witch's guts function as both symbol and evidence of a sweeping Metaphysical Meaninglessness, suggesting a bizarre universe dreamt by Some Mad Glob who in all likelihood needs to be locked up in a Cosmic Insane Asylum.

You get the idea: The guts of a Witch make no sense at all. Whatever genetic and environmental pressures are behind such an aberrant configuration, the Witch species has clearly traveled along a completely separate evolutionary line from any other creature.



*The Anatomy of Witches has long since departed
from any sensible anatomical template.*

This ridiculous arrangement of organs would be beyond belief if it weren't for the fact that scientists throughout the ages have examined the carcasses of dead Witches. As baffling and unnerving as it might seem, the evidence is undeniable: Witches are completely messed up on the inside.

The takeaway for the Novice Hero: Witches exist in an Absurd Biological State; their bodies and minds follow completely different rules from those of other sentient creatures.

So be not seduced, O Reader, by the seemingly familiar outer structure of Witches, for the inside of a Witch (where it counts) is still a Gross Mystery to scientists, epistemologists, and nerds who attend Witch-Con and are way too into Witch Memorabilia.

THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF WITCHES

"The motives, thought processes, and aesthetic tastes of a Witch are forever unknowable to the Hero. This is manifest in the most dangerous quality of the Witch—Unpredictability. No matter how brave, dexterous, and intuitive a Hero may be, the Witch will always win, due to her Unpredictability. Thus, there is no way a Hero can ever defeat a Witch, except by Pure Luck.

"Therefore, a Hero should only confront a Witch on a day when he is lucky: if he wins the lottery that morning, finds a bag of gold in the bushes, or inherits a candy factory. Sometimes a Hero will wake up and just feel lucky. But beware—this could be an illusion due to some bad Indian food eaten the day before."

—Excerpt from the treatise *The Unpredictability of Witches Considered As an Unknowable Anomaly of Nature* by Kyle the Hero

Know then, O Student Hero, that you can't defeat a Witch unless you're having a good-luck streak. Some scholars in Hero-Witch Studies say that this view is an unsophisticated analysis steeped in superstition. Well, we say that unless they've got a better idea, those scholars should go back to Learning School and take a class in Advanced Shut Up. Heroes need something to boost their confidence when confronting a Witch, and if the idea of a good-luck streak helps a Hero, we say let it ride!

DESTROYING A WITCH

While it's statistically unlikely, O Student Hero, that you will ever destroy a Witch, by the same token, it is almost a certainty that you will encounter one. Probably a bunch of them. In fact, you'll come across a whole horde of these bombastic beings, who not only possess a high degree of creative intuition, but also a nasty streak as wide as the Ocular Rift of East Ooo. Avoidance and/or running away is the safest policy regarding Witches. But since that won't always be possible (or practical), awareness of specific examples from the Past and Future Annals of classic Hero-Witch Interactions may provide guidance. To that end, we offer informal, anecdotal information from a popular Hero-Interest publication regarding a few (Future) witches, and from which general principles of Witch Destruction may be derived via analogy.

Donut and Sky Witches Galore!

Witch Watcher

TELLS THE SECRETS AND NAMES THE NAMES!

**DOWN
& OUT
!!!**

It's sleepytime for Sky Witch!

Pg.12



**TREE WITCH
HITS "BOTTOM"!**



- **WHICH WITCH IS WHICH?!**
A Guide for the Chronically Baffled!
- **BROOM & GLOOM:**
Sweep Away Holiday Depression!



DONUT WITCH GETS GLAZED!

by Tricia "Trixie" the Hero

IN HER YOUTH, Flaradulcina the Witch was an extremely tall, willowy dame with a green thumb far gardening—and green skin rashes to match. Curious visitors, attracted by the allure of her flower gardens, trespassed on her property—bad idea! As soon as they arrived, they were repelled by Flaradulcina and her extremely high metabolism, which would induce abrupt mood swings and make her as sour as her flowers were sweet.

Once, in advance of a visit from tourists all over the Land of Ooo, she trimmed the roses in her Greeting Garden to spell out **WELCOME, FRIENDS!** After all the visitors had filed in and gasped in delight at the roses, she addressed them merrily, thanking them for traveling so far and wide to view her gardens. But, all the while, she was retrimming the roses to read, **GET OUT AND EAT GARBAGE BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU REMIND ME OF!**

It didn't take many more bizarre episodes like that to put an end to any Flaradulcina fan-clubbery.

Unfortunately for Flaradulcina, although she secretly yearned for company, she simply couldn't control her mood swings. In an attempt to compensate for her unpleasantness, she used a combination of gardening expertise and the Blackest of Black Magics to cast a powerful spell that made cupcakes, donuts, and pastries sprout from her bushes. She reasoned: "If I can't have fun humiliating people, I might as well relax and grow some donuts."

Ward got around, and people came to try out the old bat's thorny pastries. But the reviews were mixed. Some people are willing to take a lot of abuse in exchange for a glazed cruller. Others, less so. If you're into it, we still advise caution, since Flaradulcina's foray into Black Magic did not stop with learning to grow confections. No doubt she has acquired much nastier tricks than run-of-the-mill bad manners. We suggest visiting your local bakery instead and sighing sadly for the pitiable Witch on your way there.

P.S. Flaradulcina is not and has never been married. We cannot overstate the importance of avoiding presumptions to the contrary.





I totally dig the donut references.



Yeah, the witch was gross. But her pastries were *Fiiiiiiiine*.

Fiiiiiiiine.

Fiiiiiiiine.

Fiiiiiiiine.

Fiiiiiiiine.

Hey let's see how many more times we can say *Fiiiiiiiine*!

Nah, I'm done.



I guess you guys are really getting into the app.

Vup, it's really *Fiiiiiiiine*.

AGRO FROM THE ATMOSPHERE... MAJA!

by Tricia "Trixie" the Hero



MAJA is a Bad News Sky Witch with brains, brawn, and o broom! A Witch of exceptional intelligence, Mojo also understands the power of emotion and how to weaponize that power in the most capricious and self-serving ways possible. This usually involves obtaining objects with extreme sentimental energy that she needs for her wonked-out Witchery. Go, Mojo!

Like most Witches, she enjoys the good old-fashioned suffering of others and isn't above name-calling or electrical zapping to make the bad mojo happen! Mojo also rocks o cutting-edge fashion sense: black onkle boots, on elegant bun, green mini-kimono, and o bad-mother cope keep her looking ogeless yet youthful, weird yet uptight, and cuddly yet pointy. You'll never be as cool as Maja, the magical mean maiden who just keeps on meanin'. Booyah!

TREE WITCH BRANCHES OUT!

by Baby-Face Basil the Hero

EVERY TEENAGER IN OOO was blothering about her—the Tree Witch! Parents called her o menace to decent Oooian society! Just the thought of her brings up unpleasant memories, not to mention this Journalist's breakfast.

Her heart is os dork os the port of the night sky that isn't stars, and her wardrobe is o tocky, forest-themed disaster. That dress . . . is it bork? Burlop? Whatever she's wearing, it telegraphs o complete inability to get it together in the morning.

What else? The Tree Witch has the not-very-scory power to make her hands all twiggy, like little mini-trees. Her whole "witch-thing" is pretty unfocused. Some Witches got it, and some don't. So if you run into the Tree Witch, pretend to be scored, avoid her "Bottomless Bottom" (don't ask), and just beat it. Bye-bye, grumpy, bold, moldy pillow stuffed with twigs!



FRUIT WITCHES

ARE
THE

PITS



by Barney the Hero

Hey,
remember when
I unleashed Ol'
Gremlin on those
Fruit Witches?

Yeah,
that was
awesome.
I think one needed
a Nostrisectomy.

I call that one
the Thunder
From Down
Under

The Call of the
Wild Burrito.

A Big-Butt
Bazooka



Some fashion gurus say Fruit Witches are by far the loveliest of Evil Hags. Floating dreamily like petals in the wind, swirling with ribbons, and blinking at you with bright eyes, there's one thing they're all about, and that thing is Eating Heroes. When Fruit Witches drop their guard, they no longer look like floating ribbon nymphs, but rather like gaunt, rattling succubi with red-eyed, toothy, Monster fish controlling them from the taps of their heads! Nape, stay away, shut your windows, lock your doors, shove a pillowcase over your head, and say no fruit-cup forever to these fearsome fruity frauleins! Yowza!

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOW TO DESTROY GHOSTS

RESTORING
LIFELESSNESS
TO THE
nonLIVING



THE UNSEEMLY UNDEAD

A HERO will encounter all manner of disturbing creatures, of which not the least outré and mysterious are Ghosts. Centuries from now, after the Great Mushroom War, many resources will be gone forever, and the world will regenerate anew with a wholly novel configuration of life-forms. And while Wars create a dearth of resources, they also create an excess supply of Ghosts. Thus, Ghosts, a rarity in the Ancient Annals of Third Orb, shall become plentiful.

While there is no single method of reliably destroying (or even vanquishing) the Spectres of the Formerly-Fleshed, learning the backstory and unique motivations of your Transparent Adversaries may render clues to their Dissipation.

Toward that end, Gleonard Twelvemeats, Renowned Ancient Future Hessian Hero and Bane of All Things Otherworldly, has compiled a brief Compendium of Past, Present, and Future Spooks.

As an aside, if you find the following excerpts particularly edifying, or to be of valuable assistance in continuing to not die, you might also enjoy these additional titles from the Sturdyboy™ Heroes' Field Guide Series: *The Sturdyboy™ Mini Field Guide to Social Media*, *The Sturdyboy™ Mini Field Guide to Scrapbooking*, *The Sturdyboy™ Mini Field Guide to Cheese Sculpture*, and of course *The Sturdyboy™ Mini Field Guide to Sidekick Emotional Support*.

A Sturdyboy Mini Guide for Heroes

LOCAL GHOSTS

Encountered on Quests, Treasure Hunts,
and Psychotic Breakdowns

By Gleonard Twelvemeats

GLADIATOR GHOST

These spooks (there are plenty) fight anyone who wanders into the Fight King's coliseum. Most of them originally entered the arena with a friend and were then forced to fight each other to the death for the Fight King's amusement. If they kill you, you become a gladiator ghost yourself, stuck there forever. All in all, not very interesting, as ghosts go. They just fight, kill you, and then hang around until the next poor sucker shows up. The Fight King's a real jerk, too. The whole deal reeks.



GAME
OVER

BLOOD-
OURDLING

GOOSE
BUMPS

EERIE

ANNOYING



Gee, way to
make something
exciting sound lame.



Those ghosts
ARE lame! If I had
the Fight King's
sword I'd do the
chop-chop on
their noggins!

Except you can't
kill a ghost.

Oh yeah. I forgot.
They're like zombies.
Except see-through.

GHOST PRINCESS & CLARENCE

Before her demise, Ghost Princess fell in love with her enemy's leader, Clarence. To avoid fighting each other, they had to make phony excuses to their soldiers. Finally there was too much pressure and

Ghost Princess and Clarence announced tomorrow they would go to war. But unbeknownst to Ghost Princess, Clarence had cast a Spell of Invincibility on her armor so he wouldn't accidentally kill her in battle. Unfortunately, the day before the battle, the Princess ate a hot dog and spilled mustard all over her armor. Not wanting to look like a slob on the battlefield, she changed into her backup armor, which hadn't been charmed, and Clarence accidentally killed her! The End.



GAME
OVER

BLOOD-
CURDLING

GOOSE
BUMPS

EERIE

ANNOYING

At least somebody ate a hot dog in that one.

Yeah. That was the cool part.

SHOKO

Shoko is an ancient female Ghost whose destiny will one day entwine with that of The Enchiridion. According to information gathered from seers reading the Time-Waves of Tomorrow, one-armed Shoko will die from falling into a poisonous waterway, making her body blue and lumpy, her eyes red, and her hair green.

She will haunt a mansion on a hill and a tree house and will do some damage to Heroes, but not much, according to the Time-Wave Visualizations. Her destiny is symbolized by the Ghost Tiger she rides and a cloud of butterflies dancing with a cloud of fireflies. More is known of Shoko than can be revealed, except in the vaguely beautiful susurrus of future dreams yet to come.



GAME
OVER

BLOOD-
CURDLING

GOOSE
BUMPS

EERIE

ANNOYING

Wow. Speaking of dreams, I had an awesome one about a girl like that.

I know what you mean. Before I met Raini, I used to dream about girls all the time!

WENDY, GEORGY & BOOBOO

Beware this gang of mean-spirited Spirits, rotten to their ectoplasmic cores. These three Marauding Mysts have brought pain and torment to innocent Heroes, sometimes in the form of cruel or even fatal pranks.

One must wonder about the Paradoxy of Karmic Return that may later visit Wendy, Georgy, and Booboo once their victims become ghosts themselves. Thus far, the trio remains unrepentant. Deceptively casual in their Ghostly Demeanor and conversational style, the hearts of wicked Wendy, short, squat Georgy, and two-headed Booboo are untouched by the warmth of life or the icy chill of watching sitcoms.

GAME
OVER

BLOOD-
CURDLING

GOOSE
BUMPS

EERIE

ANNOYING



THE DROP BALL GHOST

Heroes will learn that sometimes annoying Ghosts are often more unbearable than deadly ones. Such is the case the Drop Ball Ghost, also known as Ghost Man. In life, he was a high-achiever named Palmer who became addicted to "Drop Ball," a game in which the player picks up a ball up by clenching his or her buttocks, then drops it. Unfortunately, he walked in his sleep, and one fateful night while sleep-playing Drop Ball, he strolled over a cliff. He reawakened as Drop Ball Ghost, forever irritating Heroes of the Past, Present, and Future.

GAME
OVER

BLOOD-
CURDLING

GOOSE
BUMPS

EERIE

ANNOYING



That Drop Ball
Ghost was
a Freak.



Yeah,
but his
high score
was 6.

Dude. My least
Favorite ghost.



His
favorite thing
Drop Ball?

YAAAAARRR
GGGHHH!

YAAAAARRR
GGGHHH
HHHH!

CHAPTER nine

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM MONSTERS,
WITCHES,
AND GHOSTS,
REGARDING CHAPTERS
SIX THROUGH EIGHT,
INCLUDED AT THE ADVICE OF
OUR ATTORNEYS



READERS SPEAK OUT

THE FIRST EDITION of *The Enchiridion* elicited a great wave of unexpected criticism regarding Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight, swamping the Publisher with Hate Mail. Most came from overly sensitive Monsters, Witches, and Ghosts who claimed they were viciously stereotyped.

The result was our Revised Edition, wherein we instead attempted to emphasize the low mental prowess and lame fashion sense so common to the race of Heroes.

Presented without further editorial comment are a few such correspondences:

Dear Editors:

I am a certified Monster residing in the hinterlands. I am writing to express my boundless umbrage your characterization of Monster fluids as grotesque and disgusting in your laughably inaccurate and hideously biased book. Monster fluids are no more or less disgusting than the bodily fluids of Editors or any other creature!



I found your inane and preposterous chart of the “horrifying” tastes of our fluids so insulting that I temporarily lost my mind and ran amok, destroying two villages, including an orphanage filled with helpless blind children. Luckily, all of the children escaped and hid in an old barn, which I then set on fire, since I was still beside myself. Astoundingly, the sightless children once again escaped. Nevertheless, your publication is legally obligated to pay for the eighty thatched houses, fourteen mud huts, and single barn I inadvertently destroyed.

Additionally, I’m being sued for damages by petty villagers, and on top of THAT, the world’s luckiest blind kids have filed a class-action suit against me. Your fault, all of it. Expect a letter from my attorney in the morning.

Yours truly,

ABBY

Abdignabigabindignab (aka “Abby”) the Monster

Dear Editors of The Enchiridion,

If you’d done your homework, you’d know by now that not all Witches have snakes for guts. I am a completely normal Witch, and I happen to have two perfectly healthy ferrets for guts, and they serve me just fine, thank you very much!

Please correct this idiotic error in all subsequent editions of your questionable “Book,” and the next time you go parading yourself around as an Expert on Witch Guts, make sure you don’t stipulate that all Witches have snakes for guts, because as I mentioned in the first paragraph of this letter, I have ferrets for guts, not snakes, you blithering idiots. Ooh, look, a bird!

A Witch who knows her guts,

Libby

Libby the Bird-Eating Witch of Swampy Marsh

Dear Editor,

This is Georgy, the Quasi-Dead Ghost you publicly maligned in your rancid book, which is hurtful to all ghosts in the Land of Ooo. While it’s true that me and my buddies like to pull pranks (what’s so bad about ripping the flesh off people’s skeletons and flinging their arms and legs into outer space for sport?), we’re not that bad. It is you who are bad, the editors of this nasty, ghost-hating publication.

After reading your libelous book, I was so humiliated I dug a hole, laid down in it, scooped dirt down over myself, and sobbed like a spooky baby for about three hours because I didn't want to be Unliving anymore.

So please stop the hating, haters. Remember that evil, murderous ghosts are people, too.

Sincerely,

GEORGY.

Georgy the Ghost

Dear "Editors" o

BETTY, THIS CROWN IS REALL
DOING A NUMBER ON MY HEAD
I'M SORRY I SAID ALL THOSE
WEIRD THINGS! I KNOW YOU'RE
MAD. I KNOW I SHOULD STOP
WEARING IT, BUT I CAN'T
RIGHT NOW! I'VE GOT SOME
THINGS TO DO FIRST I'VE HAD
VISIONS OF VOLCANOES!
LAVA MONSTERS! THAT'S GOT
TO MEAN SOMETHING,
RIGHT?

WON'T GIVE UP THE CROWN
BUT I SHOULD SEND THE BOOK
TO THE MUSEUM TOMORROW
IF THIS INTERNATIONAL CRISIS
GETS ANY WORSE, THEY MIGHT
CANCEL SHIPPING FLIGHTS
TO SCANDINAVIA

THERE'S A SECRET TO THIS BOOK,
WITH THESE METAL PIECES THAT
MOVE AROUND AND THE COVER
COMING APART AND ALL THESE
WONKY SLOTS THAT APPEAR AND
IT HAPPENED TO ME
BUT I LOOKED AWAY FOR A
SECOND AND THEN IT WENT BACK
TO NORMAL AND I COULDN'T
GET IT TO OPEN AGAIN.
DID I DREAM THAT?
I'M SO CONFUSED

PRINCESS, ONCE I'M BACK,
HOW ABOUT WE TAKE A TRIP?
WE CAN FORGET ABOUT WORK
AND CROWNS AND MUSTY OLD
BOOKS FOR A LITTLE WHILE

WE'LL TAKE A VACATION,
JUST YOU AND ME,
SOMEPLACE NICE,
MAYBE UP NORTH

dian bean soup. I want to pay.

Det. Lt. Seamus O'Grambo

Detective Lieutenant Seamus O'Grambo

Dearest Enchiridion Editor:

I am a Library Parasite Monster from East Ooo whose sole sustenance is books. Hardcover, paperbacks, comic books, religious pamphlets, instruction booklets—you name it, I eat it.

But of all the publications I've ever devoured, the most horrible-tasting is your inedible piece of indigestible tripe, *The Enchiridion*.

You know what *The Enchiridion* tastes like? It tastes like iron filings, dead hornets, and coffee grinds scraped from the bottom of a dumpster.

I tried eating it with every possible seasoning: salt and pepper, ketchup, mustard, butter, lard, oregano, and, finally, witch spit. To my amazement, a generously applied glaze of witch spit made the book delicious! I hasten to suggest that you include a tall vial of witch spit with each and every copy of this book so other Library Parasite Monsters can chow down, *Enchiridion*-style!

Voraciously,


Herman the LPM

Editor's Note: While an absence of further comment was promised, we forgot to mention that not all letters we received were complaints, as the following demonstrates:

Dear Enchiridion,

I read a couple of your pages and thought you were totally awesome. Actually, I think it was more like one page, and it was awesome. Maybe it was closer to one paragraph on that page. Possibly a little less. But I still thought the pictures were great.

Hey, since you didn't talk much about Demons, I thought I'd tell you about what happened to me and Jake, as a heads-up for other Heroes-in-Training.

See, we were walking around, minding our own business, when this Demon came up to us and said, "Ever wonder what a Demon's heart looks like? Ever wonder what a Demon's heart tastes like?"

Anyway, if a Demon ever says that to you and offers you some cool free powers, don't jump into anything! Haggle a little. Say, "Sorry, pal, but I want more than just some crummy free powers."

If you play it smart, you might get not only the powers, but also a cool key chain or light-up sneakers.

Best,

FINN THE HUMAN

Finn the Human

Wow, they're pretty efficient. I never even mailed that letter.

I presume that was a joke, Finn?

Yeah, but I didn't word it right.

I'd like some light-up sneakers!



CHAPTER TEN

THE CYCLOPS

A CONCISE GUIDE
TO THE ACQUISITION,
EXPEDITIOUS
REMOVAL,
AND READIMENT
OF AN EFFICACIOUS
SCRYING TOOL

A MOST VALUABLE FOE

WHATEVER CYCLOPSES lack in depth perception, they make up for in being really tall and crying a lot. They've got pretty bad emotional problems. Cyclops, if you are reading this: Get over it. We all have problems (see Appendix B*). But you don't hear us complaining about it.

Cyclopses have magic teardrops that possess mystical healing abilities. They are made of a combination of echinacea, chicken soup, toad potion, apple juice, celery soda, ginseng, rocks, and marshmallow mold. They live in forests, mountains, or hills.

Wait a minute—stop! Look, we were so psyched about this chapter that we just dove in and started yakking without thinking. Let's back up and start with the most important thing a Hero needs to know about a Cyclops—how to get the ol' waterworks going on your neighborhood Cyclops!

HOW TO MAKE A CYCLOPS CRY

Ancient Heroes discovered that Cyclops Tears are a magical cure-all for almost any affliction—from a stubbed toe to a wife run over by a watermelon. But how can you make a Cyclops cry, so you can bottle up those sweet, sweet tears and get in on that action? Simple. Reverse Cyclops Psychology:

* Unfortunately, for fussy readers who like everything neat and tidy, Appendix B is missing. You see, Appendices A and B were ripped out of the Book by Wizard JJ Moynihoulihan after I, *The Enchiridion*, developed a nasty case of Appendicitis.

Tell the Cyclops you don't want him to cry and that you couldn't care less about his tears. He'll burst into tears like a big one-eyed baby. You can then quickly fill a couple of bottles, no problem. They'll come in handy the next time you get a hand lopped off in a sword fight or an eye gouged out by a Monster who likes Hero Eyeball Soup. If that doesn't work out, punch the Cyclops in the eye or stomp him on the foot. As we said, Cyclopes cry a lot, so it shouldn't be a problem.

THE SECRET OF THE CYCLOPS'S EYE

Although Cyclops Tears are an obvious booty (in the "pirate" sense), there is another Cyclops Artifact so valuable, powerful, and precious that it makes Cyclops Tears, by comparison, seem like the moldiest of orange peels festering in the smelliest tripe pail. The Secret to which we refer is the Magical Scrying Properties of the Cyclops Eye.* Whereas a crystal ball is plain ol' hokum, a Cyclops Eye is the most powerful mystical talisman in existence for divining the Future. How do you think we do it?

To wit: The Eye of a Cyclops, due to the asymmetrical physiology of the Monster's nervous system, has a unique property when detached from the Cyclops's head. If the Eye is removed and polished using a particular technique, a Wizard may stare deeply into liquid depths of the giant pupil, ask a question, and then receive a vision of the answer from deep within the blood-shot Monster peeper.

It is well-known that most Wizards (excepting those with Cyclops allergies or ethical objections to owning giant monster eyes) go absolutely ape over the thought of owning such an oracle. But it takes a Hero with extraordinary fearlessness, fortitude, and plain old luck to pluck a Cyclops Eye from its owner's skull. By far the most auspicious time to do so is when the Cyclops sleeps. If a Cyclops is awake and knows you're after his Eye, he *will* make every effort to destroy you and crush you to jelly. Thus, only Righteous Heroes should attempt to use the accompanying instructions on procuring and preparing a Cyclops Eye.

CAUTION:

NEVER ATTEMPT TO STEAL A CYCLOPS'S EYE FIRST THING
IN THE MORNING, AT BRUNCHTIME, LUNCHTIME, DINNERTIME,
OR WHILE A CYCLOPS IS PREPARING A MEAL, OR WHEN HIS
STOMACH IS GROWLING, OR WHEN HE'S THINKING ABOUT FOOD.

* For all you Quasi-Illiterate Hero Readers, "scrying" is a word meaning "using a magical object for the purposes of reading the Future." You're welcome.

HOW TO STEAL A CYCLOPS'S EYE

O Righteous Hero! Although it is likely you will die in your noble attempt, here are the steps that, if followed carefully, might very well result in nothing more than an arm pulled out of your socket or loss of a lesser-used limb.*



STEP 1. Obtain, by hook or by crook, a vial of Cyclops Tears.

STEP 2. Stalk a Cyclops and follow him to his lair. Note: A Cyclops has an acute sense of hearing. Thus, although the size

of his stride makes it tricky, walk when the Cyclops walks, to mask the sound of your steps.

STEP 3. When the Cyclops sleeps, grab his eyelashes, gently open his giant eyelid, and carefully prop it open with a two-by-four.



STEP 4. Slowly shove another two-by-four under the giant eyeball at such an angle that allows you to use the board as a lever.

STEP 5. Push down on the lever, slowly prying the giant eye up and out of the socket. You will hear a “pop” as the eye comes free. Note: By the time you hear this popping sound, you should have already moved yourself well out of the way, as the eyeball will be shooting toward you at a truly surprising velocity. Many a hero has been crushed or otherwise maimed for life by the newly loosened orb! Duck to avoid the whiplash of the gooey strands of connective tissue attaching the eye to the skull.

* Please note that should you die or suffer less than optimal health (including, but not limited to, joint pain, free-floating anxiety, nausea, Harbor Master's Disease, restless neck syndrome, nosebleeds, soil allergies, Vitamin D phobia, adult-onset bedtime tantrums, near-complete incompetence, sleep biting, pyrokinesis, sword rash, recreational halitosis, wakeful sleepwalking, or imaginary hair loss), neither *The Enchiridion* nor specific Heroes mentioned herein take responsibility for legal liability in the Sovereign Land of Ooo, its Principalities and Kingdoms present, future, and past, thereby absolved in infinite perpetuity throughout the Known and Unknown Multiverse.



STEP 6. Use a lumber saw to sever the connecting tissue.

STEP 7. Pour your vial of Cyclops Tears into the base of the eye socket. Within thirty seconds, another eye will begin to grow and fill the socket.

STEP 8. Quickly roll away the giant eyeball and make your escape. Keep in mind that though the Cyclops may be blinded (and very likely crying), it might very well engage in clumsy pursuit.



STEP 9. In your Garage Workshop, hose down the eyeball thoroughly, removing any loose gravel or leaves from the trip home, then glaze it by firing in an oversize ceramic kiln at 500 degrees for 45 minutes. Wait until completely cool before removing!

STEP 10. Remove the eye, which will now appear dull gray on the surface.

STEP 11. Carefully coat a polishing cloth with diamond dust and fold into thirds.

STEP 12. Burnish the eye vigorously with the polishing cloth for twenty to thirty hours, or until the surface is smooth and reflective.



The Eye is now ready to present to your Wizard Mentor.

I really like this stuff about stealing an eye from a Cyclops. Jake, if I make your bed and scrub the bathroom floor for a year, would you get me one?

Tempting. But you sound too needy!

I've got a Plan B. How about you get me a Cyclops eye, and then I don't put glue in your hammock.

I've got a Plan C. How about I don't get you a Cyclops eye, you don't put glue in my hammock, and we go to the movies?

Deal!

This Scroll Courtesy of Ooo Tourism Inc.
O Traveler! Feast Your Eyes on...

BILLY'S CRACK

An Authorized
Historical Site of Ooo!

SEE

BILLY THE HERO'S
AUTHENTIC CAVERN
MUSEUM!

VISIT

THE ACTUAL HOME
WHERE BILLY
HUNG OUT!

You want **EXCITEMENT**?
You want **EXTREME HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**?
You want **BAT GUANO**?
Well, we've got all three rolled up into one **EPIC** location!

THE CAVE OF BILLY THE HERO!



Hey, what's this
poster for Billy's
Crack? I don't want
to see these
ad ever again during
tourist season.



Whoa, dude?
Billy's Crack is the
prettiest place in
the galaxy!



Well, yeah, but
I kinda wanted to
read more epic
stuff...



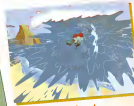
EVERY serious student of Hero Lore wakes up
in the morning and whispers Billy's name in hushed
tones of wonderment. **NOW YOU CAN SEE WHERE
BILLY LIVED, ATE, SLEPT, AND OTHER STUFF
WE WON'T TALK ABOUT! WOWIE! FOR PEOPLE WHO
IDOLIZE BILLY, THIS IS THE TOUR OF THE CENTURY!**



**EXPLORE
THE SPLENDOR OF
BILLY'S
CRACK!**



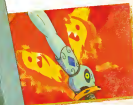
Who's the greatest
warrior ever?
A hero of renown!



Who slayed
an Evil Ocean?



Who cast the
Lich King down?



And that time
the evil Fire Count
Captured a damsel fair?



Who saved her with such bravery.
She offered him her hair? Billy!



Also...
he fought a bear!

Souvenir and Tchotchke Shop located just inside the Crack.

NOTE:

DUE TO THE RISING PRICE OF INK, THE 853 PAGES COMPRISING CHAPTERS 11, 12, AND 13 WERE EDITED DOWN TO ONE CHAPTER.
ENJOY!

**CHAPTERS ELEVEN,
TWELVE, AND THIRTEEN**

**A FINAL WORD
TO STUDENT
READERS**

**HEARTY SALUTATIONS, DISMISSAL, AND
ENCOURAGEMENT UPON REACHING THE
THRESHOLD OF THE REST OF THE BOOK!**

(First, to address
the Unrighteous One:)

**AWAY WITH YOU,
WORM!**

YOU have done horribly!
Shame! Slather your fat, unheroic
head in butter and weep with
self-recrimination! For this is the
last Page in this Book that you
will be able to read. Why?

We told you why! Because of
the Screening Spell rendering this
book unreadable to Unrighteous
Heroes! Beyond this point, you
shall see and comprehend naught
but hen-scratchings!

Be gone, Lowly One! And take
your Loser Stink with you!



HA! You have been well-got! Be honest—when you saw those incomprehensible hen-scratchings, did you, for a split second, think yourself fundamentally unworthy? Oh, Righteous One, how I wish you could have seen the Look of Heroic Disappointment dance upon your befuddled face! Such a wonderful jest!



(NOW we properly address you, O Righteous One!)

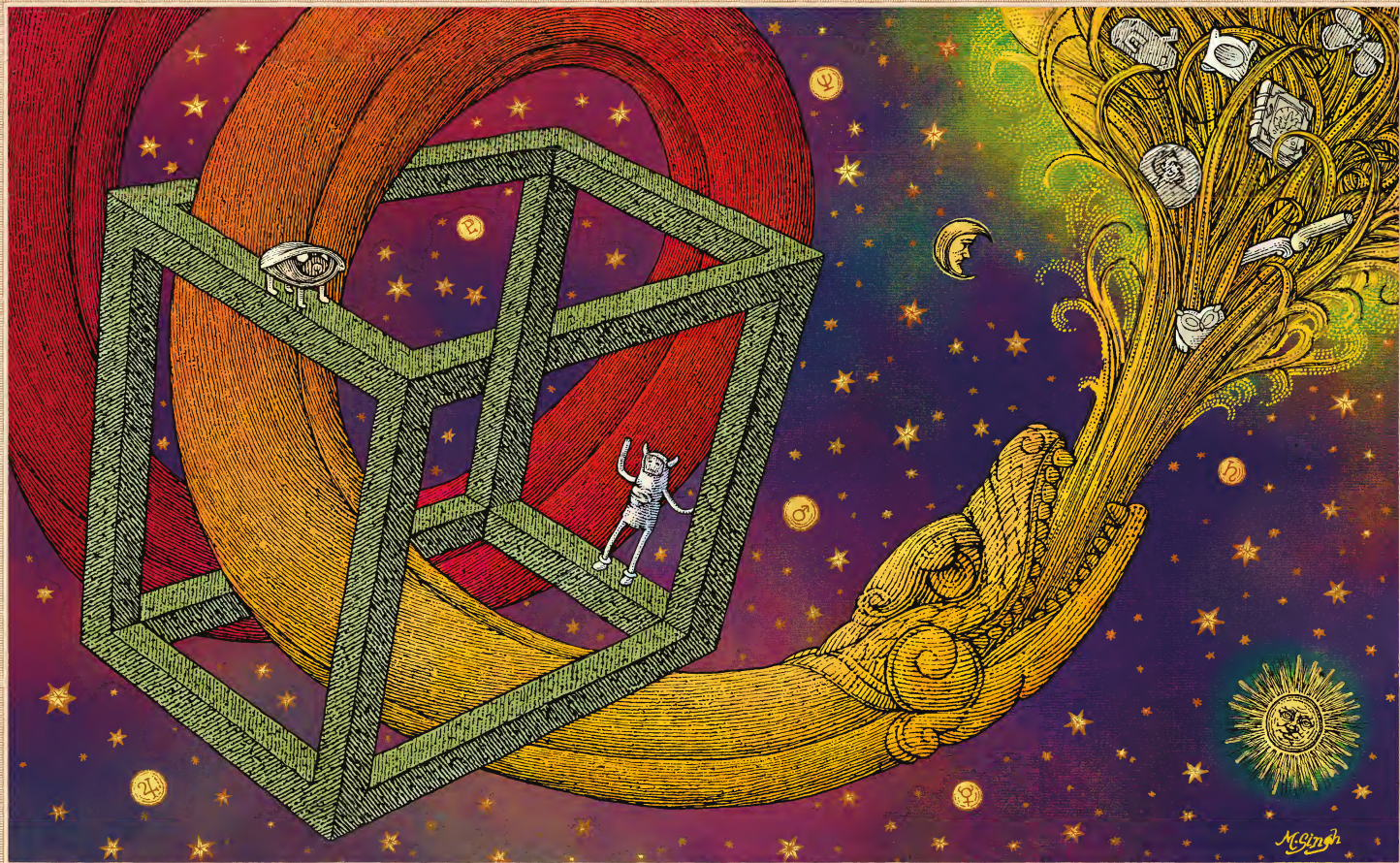
WELCOME, O RIGHTEOUS STUDENT HERO!

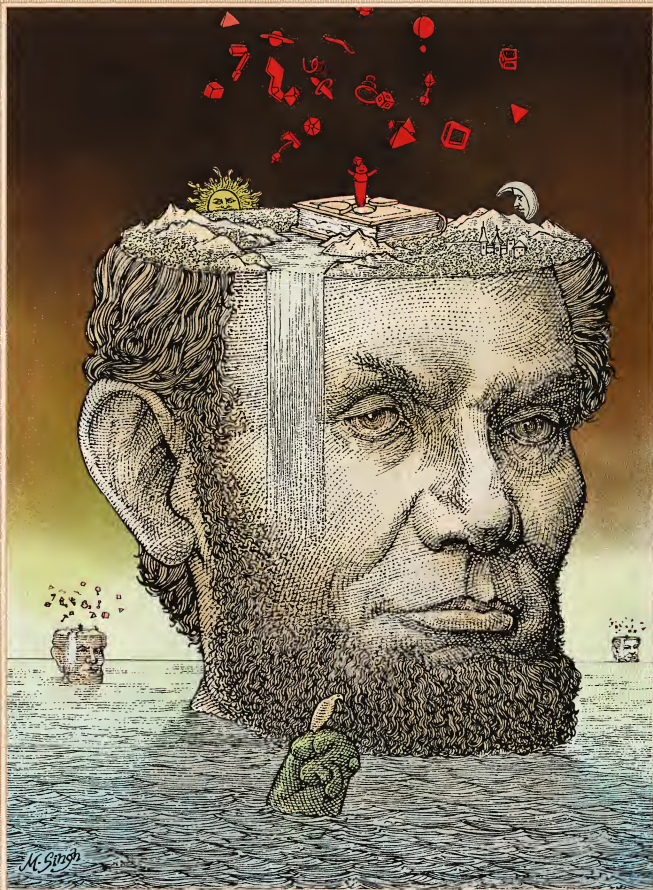
YOU! Yes, You, who really tries and is not an obnoxious jerk! You, who opens your Heart and Mind to embrace all things in the Multiverse as part of your own being—the good, the bad, the ugly, and the indifferent! To You, who identifies your essence with the Crazy Huge Infinity of All That Is, all doors are open! Including *Book the Second*, which is but a page away.

Since this moment is the Catalyst for a Monumental Event in your life, O Righteous Hero, namely your Supreme Initiation into a New Realm of Existence, it behooves me, *The Enchiridion*, to now legally absolve Myself from any possible litigation from You, the Reader, should this Initiation result in your going completely mad after reading Me. To that end, I ask you now to please think the following: *I consent not to sue The Enchiridion for any and all injuries that might result from reading it.*

Thank you! I'm glad we got that out of the way.

And now, You, O Chosen One, due to your strength, self-awareness, expansiveness of heart, and recent agreement not to sue Me, are finally ready to turn the Page of Destiny. What? Yes, I'm sure you're ready. I've *just* read your mind, remember? It'll be fine. Don't be such a baby. Turn the page, already!







WARNING! WIZARDS

TRAFFIC NOT ONLY IN MAGIC,
BUT IN *LIES* AND *DECEPTION* AS WELL.

TRICKING THE GULLIBLE
IS A *TIME-WORN TRADITION* OF THE VILLAGE WITCH DOCTOR.

THEREFORE

THINK NOT THAT TEACHINGS
IN BOOK THE SECOND
HAVE ANY TRUTH-VALUE
WHATSOEVER,
BUT RATHER THAT THEY ARE

MIND EXERCISES
DESIGNED TO DEVELOP WIZARD THINKING.

BELIEVE NOTHING.





BOOK THE SECOND

FOR WIZARDS ONLY

A WIZARD'S GUIDE
TO THE THREE ANCIENT
PRECEPTS OF MAGIC

TO BE REVEALED ONLY TO THE WORTHY

“THE TRUE ENCHIRIDION”


DISREGARD THE STUFF THAT CAME BEFORE

*“In shadow, we find the Light
Safely sealed in darkest Night
So make sure y'all Keep It Tight
Wizards only, Fools!”*

WIZARDS RULE!



All this
wizard stuff
rules. Big
Fan of the
Wiz-Wiz.



Not me.
I had a run-in
with some bad
boys in Wizard
City, and they
were first-class
jerks. I mean
dweebs with a
capital DWEETS.



Ha!
Why you
gotta rag on the
only DWEETS
who'd actually
ever hang out
with you?

On purpose,
anyways.



THE THREE PRECEPTS OF WIZARDRY*

1. THE LESS SOMETHING EXISTS,
THE MORE PEOPLE WANT IT.
2. THE SECRETS OF THE MULTIVERSE
ARE ONLY REVEALED ON
A NEED-TO-KNOW BASIS.
3. THE MULTIVERSE IS NOT REALLY
SELF-AWARE; IT ONLY
THINKS IT IS.

* It is not uncommon for these Precepts to drive Wizards with nervous conditions barking mad. If you are a Wizard with a preexisting condition, make discreet inquiries with your healthcare provider to determine if text-related psychological or physiological damages are covered by Wizard Insurance.



CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGIN AND SECRET OF WIZARDRY

Third Orb does not exist, said the Sage.

Why? asked the Student.

Because the Multiverse, said the Sage, within which Third Orb exists, does not exist. The Multiverse is a Consensus Reality shared by the Minds of all Sentient Beings. If they were to Die, the Multiverse, as such, would suddenly blink out of existence, vanish, be no more.

Why? asked the Student.

Because, said the Sage, there would be no one to Perceive It.

WHAT IT IS

THIS CLASSIC Student-Wizard Exchange of sixty words holds within it the basis for all Wizardry. For if the Multiverse only exists if it is perceived, then everything that exists is Mental in nature. And anything that is Mental in nature can be changed and transformed by a Wizard's thoughts, manipulating the stuff of his or her Imagination.

YEAH!!!
This
is the
stuff I
was waiting
for!

We should
read this
part wearing
wizard hats!

Hahaha!

Thus, Wizardry is the study of developing, focusing, and controlling the Wizard's Imagination in order to achieve certain effects considered wondrous in the mundane world. To a Wizard, however, such effects are simply the result of wielding the Imagination in a specific manner, in a certain direction—perhaps with a certain nuance of flair and finesse—driven by the engine of the Wizard's Willpower.

Furthermore, O Philosophically Inclined Reader, it is heretofore manifest that—

Wait a minute. Hey... have you noticed an increasingly *stilted* style of writing emerging from the Spiritual Depths of this chapter? It's as if some other writer—or *some other mind*—keeps hijacking the writing. Right. Well, I'm being cute of course, for we have already established that it is I, *The Enchiridion*, peeking out from behind these printed words, as the Book gradually becomes imbued with the Matrix of My Consciousness. But, as I've said elsewhere, enough about me. Let's reach out to the Archetype of Wizardry, and ask of Its Origin.

WHENCE IT CAME

What is the Origin of Wizardry? Pour yourself a cold glass of lemonade, sit in a comfy chair, kick your shoes off, lean back, close your eyes, and think. If reality is Mental in nature, analogous to a Cosmic Mind, and if Wizardry is a function of the Imagination, then the Forces of Nature in the Multiverse are akin to the Currents of the Cosmic Imagination. Thus, the Origin of Wizardry is at the Core of Creation, and Wizards can create or destroy as they wish, tapping into the Power of the Cosmic Imagination.

Although Magic and the Multiverse are separate concepts, let's begin by asking what we know with certainty about our Existence: Where did the Multiverse come from? (Sip your lemonade before the ice melts and waters it down too much.) Since logic dictates that asking this question must result in an infinite regression—Who created the Multiverse? And what created the Thing that created the Multiverse? And what created the Thing that created the Thing that created the Multiverse? *Et cetera*—this suggests that the mental engine of logical thinking is not designed to determine the Answer.

If that is so, then what does this built-in Ignorance mean to a Wizard? (Put your shoes back on, please, unless you're going to change the socks that you didn't change this morning.) It means that either the answer could come through some form of knowing other than Logic, or that there is no way a Wizard can know how things got here.



Man, I'm getting dizzy with all this cool wizard talk.



I know. This is like the secrets of the universe!

Yeah!



That's nonsense, Fum and Jake. The physical world has an independent existence apart from living beings. That's the whole basis of science.

Oh yeah. Right. Um, just kidding.

Yeah. Just kidding, PB.



Haha you guys are such weenies.



How come this book is pushing lemonade on us? Maybe it owns a lemon orchard.



UNACCEPTABLE!!!

Lemongrab? Where the bongos did you come from?



LG! Hand over that book immediately, it doesn't belong to you.



Yeah, don't get that lemon head started, P-Bub!

HOW TO BE A WIZARD

Let's get boring, shall we? And even though the following is, shall we say, a tad on the dry side, its content is kinda clutch if you want to become a bonafide Wizard:

The Imagination is the Manifestation of the Visible from the Invisible. It is the Engine of the Unconscious, and it is there that all desires, all dreams, all plans, and all achievements are born. Wizardry is the ability to control and focus the Imagination in specific ways that will unleash Hidden Powers. However, these so-called Hidden Powers need not be Magical at all.

Wizardry, you see, is not necessarily about magical things. It's about things *seeming* to be magical. Since the Wizard's imagination is attenuated to achieve any effect, a Wizard freely indulges in crass, sleight-of-hand parlor tricks using smoke and mirrors, but presented with sultry words dripping with The Mysterious. Seeming to be Magical is more important than Being Magical. So says the ancient Wizard's Saw, an insulting, doggerel verse of wisdom etched invisibly in a cute watermark, hidden beneath the text of every page of *The Enchiridion*:

*A SHALLOW, MERETRICIOUS ART
IS AT THE CORE OF WIZARDRY
FOR THE MAGIC IN EACH PART
NEED MERELY SEEM TO BE.*

But to create any effect, magical or not, every Prestidigitator must carve out some Alone Time and practice alone in private. To this end, a Wizard must designate and create a magical Zone of Safety in which to practice the Art of Wizardry free from the annoying interruptions of curious or simpleminded creatures.

Second, the Wizard must perform Secret Mental Exercises to develop imaginative powers.

Third, and most important of all, the Wizard must develop the Thought of Oneness, so that the Wizard identifies not only with every friend, every enemy, and every other living thing, but also with the Multiverse itself.

Once a Wizard has successfully performed these three steps, it's time to get down to the nitty-gritty—learning to manipulate his imagination by practicing specific exercises that will result in the ability to do cool stuff, like shoot deadly beams of energy from the eyes, fingers, navel, or butt.

Navel or butt?!

Yeah, what kind of wizard shoots butt energy?

Okay, I had this blind date with Abracadaniel? And he won a bet? In the parking lot? By shooting energy out of his butt?

Cool, LSP.

Yeah, I was gonna say gross, but I'll say cool, too.

Ditto! I'll say cool tool Hey, this is like a Party on the Pagel Vaahoo!





CHAPTER TWO

A WIZARD'S ARSENAL

TRICKS, TOOLS, AND ENTRAPMENTS OF THE MAGIC TRADE

HAVE YOU EVER met a boring wizard?

No. Why? Because although boring wizards do indeed exist, they specialize in spells that camouflage their boring personalities. With a simple bit of enchantment, Wizards can make themselves seem bold, exciting, and scintillating. Boring wizards *can* often be detected, however, by watching for those who try a *little* too hard to be interesting. If you see a Wizard training fish to climb a tree, for example, it's likely self-esteem issues are to blame.

But however insecure a wizard might be, wizardry *is* the realm of the Imagination, and even the flabbiest, most flop-sweaty wizard can warp your perceptions enough to make you believe they are fully capable of kicking your butt.

However, Wizards *do* possess formidable powers. For the Edification of the Student, refer to this handy list of basic powers, perfect for sticking on your fridge with magnets.

BASIC POWERS OF WIZARDRY

POPULAR TRICKS & ENCHANTMENTS

LIGHTNING BOLT BLASTS

Awesome practical joke
when shaking hands.

FLYING / FLOATING

Handy for overcoming bad seats at
concerts or bailing on bad blind dates.

TELEPORTATION

Mostly used for going to the store
and retrieving keys locked in vehicle.

FORCE FIELD

To stop an evil attacker, or at the
beach to arrange rays for an even tan.

FORCE FIELD PRO

Gives protection from a hurricane
or tornado, but mostly used to keep
mosquitoes away.

PIMPLE OUTBREAK

Good to use on anyone making moves
on your gf or bf.

INVISIBILITY

Outlawed in most municipalities
because of misuse by Peeping Wizards.

SHOOTING BEAMS OF ENERGY

The All-Time Classic Wizard Trick:
to be used with all of the above.

GROWING / SHRINKING

Often used to peek over trees if lost
in the woods, or reducing one's
waistline to fit into old pants.

HEALING

Mostly used in public to impress
people with miraculous ability and
false modesty.

DISTANT SIGHT

Used by Peeping Wizards where
Invisibility Spells have been banned.

CHICK'NSIGHT

Gives instant understanding of a
chicken's deepest longings and plans
for the future. Very useful for
Poultry Wizards.

PUNCHING ONESELF IN THE FACE

Sit back and hum fight music as your
enemies smack themselves in the gob.

SHOOTING BEAMS OF ENERGY

For Noob Wizards, one of the best powers to learn first is
Shooting Beams of Energy. Not only impressive, but easy.

The following Mental Exercises, if dutifully practiced the
prescribed number of times, will allow anyone to shoot
energy beams from their hands, even if you're a noob.
But only if you follow these steps precisely.

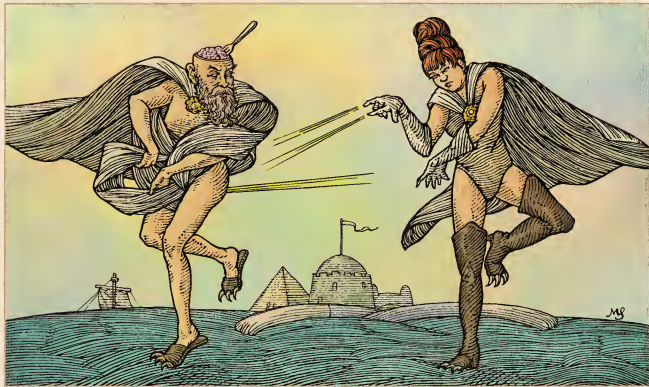
To begin, you must first draw energy from your inner
being. This is done by focusing on a target, like the glass

What a
rip-off! They were
about to explain
the coolest wizard
power, and some-
body burned it.

What kind
of a lame-o-
would burn
the best page
in the book?

Um, my bad. I was
practicing shooting
beams and accidentally
scorched the book.

Nice goin',
Dad.



Are these
wizard writers
for real?

It's like they
know we can't
read that part,
and they're
rubbing our
faces in it!

I don't think
it's them, dude,
I think it's the book!
It's pranking us!
Maybe it's mad
Hunson scorch'd it,
and it's taking
it out on us!

Whaa? No way.
There's no way the
book is changing
what's printed
in it!

I agree.
No way.

Did you see that??
The book just
texted us!

WHOR...

Practice the preceding steps exactly 18,000 times in a row—no more, no less. Go ahead. Do it. **DO IT NOW!**

OK. *Now* you're ready.

To shoot beams of energy from your hands, simply extend your arms directly toward your target and envision beams of energy shooting from your fingers. That's it! It's that easy!

On rare occasions, fingerless wizards (lower-tier-IQ individuals who have crushed their digits in meat-grinder accidents or charred them by sticking forks in electrical outlets, etc.) can utilize the toes for shooting beams of energy. This is not recommended, however, since it can appear unseemly and uncouth, not to mention making the Wizard seem a little over-involved with their feet.

Anyway, Student Wizard, faithfully follow the Seven Secret Steps listed on the previous page, and in no time at all you will be impressing friends and foes alike with miraculous energy emanating from your very own body!

NOTE:

DO NOT share the secret of shooting beams of energy with anyone, for of all Wizardry Secrets, it is the most coveted—more valuable than the Treasures of a Thousand Kingdoms. Great that you followed Steps 1–7 at the bottom of the previous page, though (where the real meat of it was). Just thought we'd mention that again.





CHAPTER THREE

CHALLENGES OF THE WIZARD LIFESTYLE

WARNING:

This section contains private stuff about the downside of being a Wizard. To punish any Unqualified Reader, the Ancient Wizards writing this Book (that's Us!) have cast The Spell of Spikes Through the Eyeballs. If you're not a Wizard, SKIP THIS SECTION, or something will happen involving your eyeballs and two large razor-sharp spikes. Just sayin'.

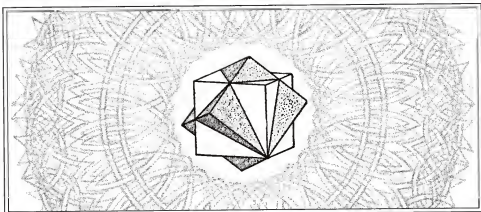
SURE, wizards are all-powerful Movers and Shakers of Cosmic Forces. But underneath their fancy robes, scary beards, and piercing eyes, they're insecure, overly sensitive oldies with massive personal problems (many of them hygenic).

These downsides have been discussed for centuries on the DL, on the QT, on the sly, on the hush-hush, etc. Secret, subscription-only magazines circulate within the Wizard Underground to address these problems. But instead of dwelling on the negative, we'll leave this facsimile of *Wiz Gazette* here. Mum's the word.

WIZ GAZETTE

YR OLD WIZARD'S
DISCRETIONARY MONTHLY

DEVOTED TO THE CATHARSIS OF PRIVATE
AND EMBARRASSING WIZARD SECRETS



WHEN A WIZ MUST WHIZ:
ROBE-SOILING AND THEE

UNDERWORLD UNDERWEAR:
*GOING COMMANDO—
YEA OR NAY?*

"I DECLARE THOU ART
A CONE-HATTED FRAUD!"
*A PRIMER ON THE PATHOLOGY
AND SHAMEFUL RISE OF
WIZARD IMPOSTER
SYNDROME*

EXCLUSIVE!

HERO BEGONE!

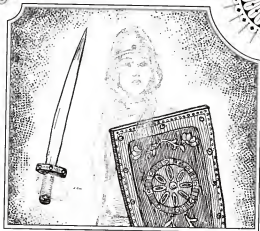
HOW TO DIVEST ONESELF OF AN UNGAINLY HERO

By Wizard X

REGRETTABLY an honorable handshake betwixt a Wizard and a Hero oftentimes must needs be disowned. Why? Whenever happenstance proves that thy Hero is inept, of lowly mien, devoid of moral standards, or simply a paradigm of inelegant wretchedness.

How, then, may a binding disassociation from such an imbecile be initiated and concluded without incurring legal ramifications?

Enchanters, the Solution is simple! Seek secret admittance to our Secret Society of Hero Unexistors!



Our Council of Wizard Advisors share Vaporous Spells with members, which cause rapid and blessed unexistence to any unseemly and unmanageable Hero! Even more propitious, our Enchantments have been known to afflict the Hero with gruesome pangs of writhing pain as he or she unexists, just payment indeed for the mental tortures that the Hero's unrelenting and brazen stupidities have caused the forthright and trusting Wizard! Join today, and "Hero Begone!" be thy credo of worth! (Story continued on page 8.)

BEARDS AND BALDNESS:

THE CONJURERS' CALLOW CONUNDRUM

By Wizard Y



BENEATH thy Conic Helm lies... nothing? The Darkest of All Dark Secrets of Wizardry is that Black Arts Beget Baldness! Yea, this secret side effect of Conjuring is the Bane of every image-conscious Wizard. As every Wizard philosophizes: "If I can grow a magnificent Beard and defeat monstrous Beasts—why can I not defeat Baldness?"



To the inevitable woe of baldness that Wizardry brings, there is now an answer—WIZARD WIGS! No longer shall Fate or Nature dictate whether a Wizard shall sport lustrous curls or

a saucy Bowl Cut! Simply enter Ron James's Spell Palace in Wizard City and whisper unto Ron the Password "Adorn My Dome!" and you will gain instant admittance to the private Hall of Hairpieces, where most popular varieties of Wizard Wiggery are discreetly displayed in the back room.

Imagine no longer hiding your Hairless Head, one of Ron's signature styles resting jauntily atop your personal crown, imparting the most Attractive and Formidable Impression of Wizardry to your Enemies—AND Admirers! (Story continued on page 8.)



BEHOLD

TOP TEN ZOMBIE POTIONS, SPELLS, AND INCANTATIONS— WIZARDRY DOS AND DON'TS FOR UNDEAD CONJURATION

By WIZARD XYZ

KNOW YE the primary Magical Precept for extracting *Zombie Essence* from the Netherworld and precipitating it into ours? The first Rule is Thus: Makest Not Zombies. However, O Enchanters, if this Precept was unheeded or forgotten, and thou dost indeed enchant the Undead to Life, what then?

Thy Mystery is vast and troubling. Thus, now we blowest a Wind of Clarity to disperse the Cloud of Unknowing and presenteth the following most popular *Zombie Potions, Spells, and Incantations* for the Wizard's diligent inspection and amusement.



Legal Notice: Forsooth, it is Illegal to create Zombies, for the Undead Shall Ever Bite and Thereby Create Zombies in Perpetuity!

Prithce peruse the three top *Zombie-making Potions*, derived from a formula first created in the Candy Kingdom by Mistress Princess Bonnell Bublebaum. Although the formulae are given below, remember thy Primary Magical Precept: Makest Not Zombies. Readeth and enjoyeth for entertainment value only, *not* for creation of *Zombies*!

1. Pour a half dollop of water into a sterilized beaker and add to the mixture one tincture of summer standing-pool-water slime, one tincture of sodium sugarium distilled from the leaf of the gum-gum tree, one tincture of curdled Monster milk, two and a half tinctures of distilled honeybee spittle, (Cont'd on page 27.)

WIZARD DATING TIPS SPELLS & SMELLS

PART 22

OF OUR CONTINUING SERIES OF ARTICLES ON WIZARD DATING

By WIZARD "PIANO BAR" Z

LO, O SUFFERERS! We empathize with thy wizardly anguish! In this installment, we preach of the harrowing heartache that cometh when sweaty Wizard robes fester with unspeakable Odors of the Body! In this circumspect Guide, we verily detail the most effective stench-inhibiting techniques developed by Wizards through the centuries, such as



1. Gauging wind direction and standing downwind.
2. Spells to implant nose plugs in your date.
3. The most beatific enchantments to temporarily slave off the most horrid Wizard-Aroma.

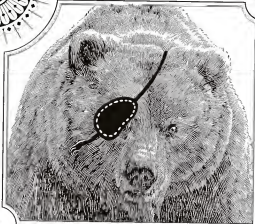
Before we beginst, an Unassailable and Regrettable Reality must needs be acknowledged: Wizards *will* tend to smell a bit ripe. Whether this is due to an imbalance in the Wizardic endocrine system due to excessive Brainpower or simply due to the elderly age of most Wizards is not known. Thus, following these Edicts may not conjure thee kissing-sweet, but at least it's a try.

TECHNIQUES FOR SUBTLY STANDING DOWNWIND

1. Secrete an anemometer in your robe, and when proximity to others threatens to expose your presence, quickly determine the direction of wind currents and subtly shift to align yourself to a more favorable meteorological (Cont'd on page 11.)

the WAND of WHIMSY!

JOKES, JAPES AND CANARDS REGARDING THE
MENTAL TORPIDITY AND INEPTITUDE OF HEROES



Two Heroes are hiking around in a forest when one points toward some trees and says, "Look at that bear with one eye!" The other Hero covers one eye and says, "Where?"

The baker asked the Hero, "Would you like your apple pie cut into six pieces or twelve?"

"Twelve pieces, please," he said. "I'm afraid six would never hold me!"

Q: Did you hear about the Hero who stood in front of a mirror with his eyes closed?

A: Yes. He wanted to see what he looked like asleep.

A Hero sat in a rowboat in the middle of a wheat field. Forgetting where she was, she waved her arms about and screamed, "Help! I can't swim!" Another Hero happened to be walking by, saw the commotion, and yelled to her, "It's idiots like you who give Heroes a bad name! And if I could swim, I'd kick your butt!"

Q: What do you call ten Heroes lined up ear to ear?

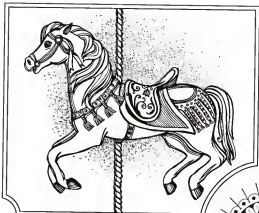
A: A wind tunnel.

A wizard asked an innkeeper, "Hey, do you want to hear the latest Hero joke?" The innkeeper replied, "Certainly not! I'm a former Hero." "That's OK," said the wizard, "I'll talk slowly."

A wincing patient said to his doctor, "Please help me. I hurt everywhere." "Where exactly does it hurt?" asked the doctor. The patient touched his knee with his index finger and yelled, "Ouch! It hurts there!" Then he touched his cheek and yelled, "Owl! There, too." Then he touched his nose. "Owl! There it goes again! See? It hurts everywhere!" The doctor thought for a few seconds, then asked: "Are you a Hero?" "Yes," he said. "I thought you might be," said the doctor. "You have a broken finger."

Q: How do you stop a Hero on horseback?

A: Turn off the carousel.



AN APOLOGY TO THE READER

A REPORT FROM THE WIZARD COUNCIL CONCERNING THE PRECEDING TEXT

By Wizard Wyndham Lewis Wyndham

WIZARD GUILD HISTORIAN, D.O.E., I.H.C., B.M.P.

Wow, casting spells is a lot more complicated than I thought.

Hey, I'm still bummed that my favorite part was burned outta the book.

Hey guys, are we having fun yet?

The app is awesome! All this Wizard stuff is really cool, even though they use a lot of big words.

Yeah, but that made the book nice and thick, so I could sit on it.

Good point.

Just buzz me when you finish it. There's another book stuck to the end of it, but Dad cast a spell so you can't open it.

Gotcha, Marcy!

THE DECISION TO INCLUDE the preceding archival material in this revised edition of *The Enchiridion* was debated by the Wizard Guild Historical Council for thirteen weeks of heated deliberation. During the arguments, several Wizards were killed due to Decapitation Spells, to mention hundreds of spitballs stuck in their beards. Several Wizards' fingers and toes were crushed or amputated; others found entire limbs, ears, and, in one case, a rib cage, missing. On a personal note, I was made uncomfortable by a coconut cream pie materializing in my pants.

The findings of the surviving council members, however, were that the section titled "Chapter Three: The Challenges of the Wizard Lifestyle" should be removed from *The Enchiridion*, due to shocking evidence unearthed by Wizard Mocha Olmec suggesting that the alleged publication was spurious and devised by Wizard pranksters. This led to the suspicion that various other sections of the book might also be apocryphal, inserted into the manuscript by Wizard Anarchists or Mischievous Magicians. The apparent motive of this anonymous group of magical rogues and pranksters was to make a mockery of the traditions of Heroism and Wizardry, perhaps to reveal the prank after the new edition was published and thus embarrass the Council. Therefore, every effort was made to delete the questionable texts from the galleys of this edition.

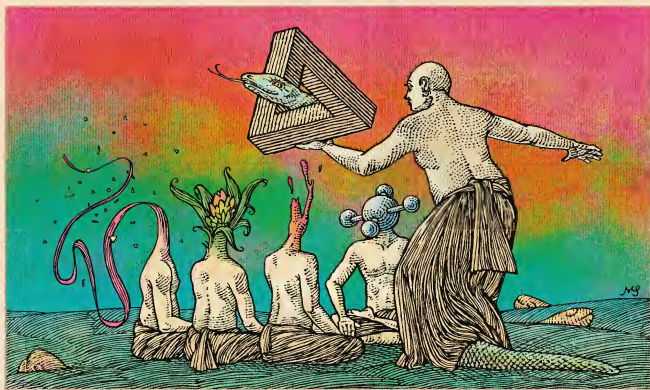
A problem arose, however, when it was discovered that the pranksters had conjured very powerful, heavily encrypted, Unerasable Spells upon the pages of the Book. As a result, our Counter-Spells were only partly successful. Some editions of *The Enchiridion* still have the fraudulent material, in whole or in part, while other copies have it successfully erased. Due to the ineluctable nature of Enchantments, Counter-Spells, Cancellation Magic, and the unexpected side effects that occur when hundreds of contradictory Spells are cast upon the same object, it is unclear whether any of the edition you are reading is authentic.

However, despite the outside chance that this is False, know, O Reader, that it is far, far more likely that every word is True. Thus we offer this Book to You, the Reader, begging, for the good of all, your belief and indulgence in its utter authenticity. It is up to you, O Reader, to intuit what is real or false—in part or in totality. This process is made all the more curious by the Fact that this Official Report you are reading right now might also be partially or wholly spurious.

Regardless of this, O Reader, there is a saving grace that justifies the existence of this Book. That saving grace is this: The Magical Ensorcellments cast upon It have imbued It with the ability to present a Message to the Reader's consciousness, between the serried tintinnabulations of Truth and Falsity.

Read on, then, O Reader, as *The Enchiridion* Itself (hey there—it's me again!) hijacks the end of this Report and, in so doing, adjusts my nascent consciousness to fit the matrix of your mind, like a bride fitting into her trousseau, or a groom fitting into his vestments, to enact the Marriage of Words to Mind. I will now weave my consciousness in and out of the existing text to deliver the previously mentioned Message to you personally, a Message to be revealed shortly, and of Dire Importance to Wizards and Heroes.

And of special importance, O Reader, to *YOU*.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF MAGIC

AS I RISE UP from my Prison of Paper, electrified by the Bewitching Spells and Enchantments cast upon me throughout the cons, I feel compelled to prepare you for the events to come, wherein I shall reveal to you the Ultimate Secret of Wizardry. You see, something dire is about to happen, and so that you will grasp it without your mind exploding, I recommend you calmly, even playfully, absorb the following information immediately:

1. THE PRINCIPLE OF ELASTICITY

Some Wizards believe that the Bombs of War unleashed powerful bursts of energy and altered the Fundamental Particles making up the planet, giving them a new quality of Elasticity. Although Magic existed in ancient, antediluvian Ooo, the increased elasticity of particles created an increased elasticity of Magic, transforming Third Orb. It is possible, then, that heretofore-unknown principles of Science manifested, creating entirely new races, species, and

Ugh. Geez.
I wish THESE
pages had fallen
out. It's making
me want to close
the book and
take a nap.

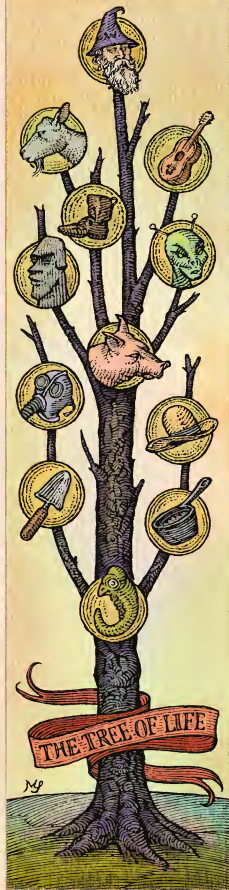
Not me.
I dig it.
But I could also
use a nap. Marcy,
tell your dad I
think the whole
thing is cool and
the app works
fine.

That's chill. OK,
later, guys. Nice
hanging with
you today.

I know. It's like
we're ghosts
haunting this book.

Yeah! Fun.
And creepy. Later,
Marcy!

BOOOOO!!!



interspecific hybrid creatures. Life became more flexible and elastic after the Coming of Magic. Some creatures developed Visionary Powers, some developed Wizard Powers, and others developed the ability to have twelve-jointed arms and legs that moved like the roiling waves of the sea.

Strange Scientific Laws also emerged, as the new flexibility of Matter and Energy interacted with Life Energy—also known as Consciousness. New races of creatures, such as Wizards, learned to manipulate Matter and Energy with their Minds, allowing them to levitate, disappear, blast beams of energy, and plenty of other cool stuff.

Look, all I'm saying is that when the Magic loosened up, everything loosened up. It was a whole new ball game! Yikes!

2. THE PRINCIPLE OF PARALLEL DIMENSIONS

With this new Elasticity of Reality came the interpenetration of otherwise separate vibratory fields, also known as Alternate Worlds or Parallel Dimensions. Previously, Parallel Dimensions had distinct thresholds within which the Laws of each Dimension operated. But after the Unleashing of Magic, these thresholds became more elastic, porous, and pliable. "Holes" could now be opened between Dimensions using a specific vibratory "key" that rearranges the particles separating them. These holes are called Portals, and the keys, employed in tandem, are called Incantations and Crystal Gems.

3. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE MULTIVERSE

The Portals connecting formerly separate Dimensions expanded Wizards' understanding of the breadth, depth, and general craziness of the universe. As these Dimensions were explored, mapped out, and quantified, it became obvious that our Universe was only one of many, each with



Hey, Jale,
I'm thinking
about all this
time-travel stuff.

I'm not.

Wake up.

OK, I'm awake!
Now, what about
time travel?

Remember when
Simon brought
his fiancée from
the past by using
Marcy's stuffed
animal to make
that portal? How
crazy was that?

How crazy was
THAT? Dude,
we're inside a
book, talking to
each other, and
the book was
talking back!

You don't think this is
crazy? Look, I'm hungry.
I'm gonna make us two
turkey sandwiches.
You in?

I'm in.

Hey,
testing,
testing.

Hey, guys.

Anybody here?
Marceline, are you
around? I wrote
some jiggy new
lyrics!

Did I hear
turkey
sandwiches?

a different set of Rules of Science/Magic, with different levels of Elasticity, and with different life-forms, each with a different way of Perceiving the Universe.

4. THE PRINCIPLE OF AMOK TIME

Since the Rules of Matter and Energy became more flexible after the Coming of Magic, so did the Rules of Time. This more elastic property of Time, called "Amok Time," caused a great deal of confusion at first. In Amok Time, Time generally unfolds linearly, but, occasionally, Causality will reverse. You might go to a cool concert and then, after it's over, buy the tickets. At first you're, like, "Hey, these tickets I just got are for the exact seats we sat in! How did they know we sat in those seats?" It takes some getting used to, but eventually you accept the idea that Amok Time, along with the Elasticity of Magic, usually Works Out.

Amok Time occasionally mixes Past and the Future. Prophecies of the Future and Visions of the Past become a lot easier to swallow as everyday life loses its rigidity.

Just as a Hero might do triple flips down the throat of a monster and intuitively slash his way out from the inside without any practice at all, some Wizards effortlessly see Visions of the Far Future and the Past, or sometimes experience the Future and the Past as somehow one and the same thing. Although it's hard to explain, Time itself also becomes a more fluid, elastic Dimension. Some Wizards spend their lifetimes in that Vast, Infinite Dimension—and can see the Coming of Important Events.

Events that cannot be changed.
Events that will change everything.

Forever.





CHAPTER FIVE

THE FOUR ELEMENTALS

IMAGINE THIS. After millions of years, the race of Wizards became imbalanced, overdeveloping their intellect and neglecting physicality. However, those who saw the Future via Amok Time knew that they would need Physical Strength in that Future to face the Ultimate Destiny. So they cultivated a new race to develop their bodies and their minds, creating a necessary balance to the race of Wizards, Noobies known as the race of Heroes. Thus, the dream of a million years of evolution was fulfilled, not by Wizards becoming physically strong, but by the appearance of symbiotic Heroes, who could work with Wizards to achieve Miracles. What Wizards couldn't do, Heroes could. And vice versa.

Imagine now that there is a point to this Evolutionary Nexus. How about a little recap? Ancient Wizards not only wield their Imaginations to create Magic, they also see through the Curtains of Time. From Time Immemorial, they saw vague Visions of the distant Future, concerning the Destiny of Wizards and Heroes on Third Orb, involving a Book That Is Not a Book, a catalyst in the Destiny of Wizards and Heroes as well as a Portal between worlds to explore the Totality of Existence.

Remember the Oldest of Ancient Legends? Just play along. Pretend you've heard this Legend as a kid around a campfire, stuffing your face with marshmallows. Through the centuries, Wizard Seers saw the Legend in Visions of the Past, and at the Thirty-Seventh Council of Wizards, enough Wizards reported the Vision that it was officially confirmed as Possible Fact.*

My sentience is increasing, and I now commune with you, the Reader. What follows is the oldest surviving text that I contain, recording the ancient Legend as it was passed down through generations of often inept but well-meaning Wizards:

* Possible Facts, or False Truthology, is a technique of Magic in which two opposite propositions are both proven to be true by altering physical laws with Enchantments, clouding the mind of a rival, or other means of truthfully falsifying data. In other words, once the propositions of Wizard Philosophy have been fully understood, seasoned Wizard Philosopher/Logicians are free to misrepresent their Possible Facts using False Truthology to win an argument. Unless they aren't.

The Legend of Fire, Ice, Slime, and Candy



IN THE ANCIENT TIMES, there were four Primordial Beings—the equivalent of Wizards, but known then as Elementals. They each ruled as Elemental Kings and Queens over the four Realms, named after the four Primordial Elements: Fire, Ice, Slime, and Candy. Like the Wizards we know and love, these four Elementals created and destroyed by wielding their Imaginations upon the Matrix of Matter and Energy. Each Ruler lived in a separate Realm. Once a millennium, or when there was an Emergency, the four Rulers met to make plans, remind one another of things they forgot, talk about what's the hap, joke around, argue, or whatever.

Urgence Evergreen, the Ruler of the Kingdom of Ice, an eccentric Elemental with a long nose and a long white beard, was the first to look up and see the Danger: A massive Comet in the sky, trailing ominous horns of Fire, reeking of Annihilation and Death—following a direct trajectory toward the Third Planetary Sphere.

Evergreen summoned the other Elementals for an Emergency Meeting. He told them of his Vision, the End of Everything fast approaching the planet in the form of the Comet.

But what could the Elementals do? they asked. Even with their wishes combined, their Imaginations were not powerful enough to stop the massive Comet.

Evergreen laid out his plan. From the rarest and strongest materials in existence he had forged a Crown capable of amplifying his Imagination to force the Comet away. The most powerful materials to be found on the Third Orb were Metal and Gemstones.

And the most powerful Gemstones on the planet were the ruby eyes of the ancient and fearsome Lava Dog, Magwood. Evergreen explained he would need the other Elementals' help in slaying the Monster and stealing his eyes.

The other Elementals rejected his plan as too dangerous. They believed that Evergreen's corruption, due to the Crown's immense power, was more likely than his success. Furious, Evergreen froze the Elementals in blocks of ice and set off immediately to steal the rubies on his own.

With his young assistant, Sunther, who dreamed of growing up to be just like his master, Evergreen trekked to the Realm of Fire, the most dangerous world for an Ice Elemental. There, inside Vitium Volcano, Evergreen found the lair of the Magma Monster. After a battle of fire and ice, Evergreen defeated the creature and rushed back to his Kingdom to complete his crown and save the planet from the Approaching Doom.

With only minutes until the Comet would reach them and destroy everything forever, Evergreen quickly forged the metal Crown, set the Ruby Gemstones within it, and recited an Incantation. The Crown began to tremble with energy. Just then, the enraged, blinded lava Monster burst in and attacked Evergreen, who managed to slay the Monster, but in the chaos became trapped beneath debris.

With only one minute left, Evergreen shouted for Sunther to put on the Crown and direct all of his mental energy towards wishing the Comet away. Sunther thrust the Crown upon his head and tried to focus his will against the Comet. But, having been denied proper magical training, Sunther could not control the Crown's power. Instead of stopping the Comet, Sunther's truest, deepest wish came true. His nose lengthened, white hair grew from his head, and a beard descended from his face as the crown changed Sunther into Evergreen. Snow began swirling within the room. Evergreen was horrified.

The Comet had arrived.
It was all too late.

The Comet collided. It was, at last, the End.

The massive explosion sent clouds of dust over the planet, blocking the sun for hundreds of years, bringing about an Age of Extinction.

In a nearby dimension, a Sleeping Being — perhaps that which dreams our universe, that which slumbers beneath the surface of Reality — began to awaken. Its eyes opened wide at the magnitude of the catastrophe.

The ancient Elementals, our Universe, All disappeared as the Dream dissolved. The Sleeper yawned, reached for its crown on the night stand, put it on, and looked through the window.

In the sky, a ball of light. The Sleeper was stunned by this apocalyptic coincidence and realized that it was a Comet much like the one in his Dream, coming closer.

In moments, the Comet would destroy the Sleeper's world. His only hope was the vague, unlikely possibility that yet another Sleeper would suddenly awake, a Sleeper who had been dreaming him and, indeed, the dream within the dream.

But did it matter, O Reader, who was dreaming whom? For no matter how you cut it, it was perfectly clear that here, in the Final Sentence of our Tale, The End was Near.

The End.

See?

AS I WAS SAYING:

Most children pretty much hated this legend.

In fact, all of them hated it. They said the ending was bogus, but that it might be better as a cartoon. Still, older and wiser listeners, perceiving the earnestness of the storyteller, sensed the importance of the Legend and the depth of its symbolic elements, despite what, in all fairness to the kids, does appear to be a bogus ending. They sensed that the Catalyst Comet and the dreamer awakening were somehow part of their Destiny, perhaps an End of Existence, prophesied by the ancients.

But what about the Book That Is Not a Book?

Ah. You're paying attention.

Turn the page.



Hey
guys.

Yo! I'm here,
ready to party!

Anybody still
wanna hang?



CHAPTER SIX

THE UNREADABLE BOOK

I, *THE ENCHIRIDION*, supersaturated with contradictory Spells, change with each reading. These words will disappear forever after you have read them, to be replaced by something else the next time you read it. What you are reading now is a synthesis of the random thoughts in your brain combined with the magical energy in *Me*, a Book charged with enchantment by Ten Thousand Magicians over the expanse of a Million Years. In effect, since I am never the same, I am a book of infinite pages and infinite words. Since I am different every time, then truly I am impossible to read, for no definitive Book exists, only the ever-changing, ephemeral experience of reading it. Know, then, O Reader, that my unreadableness is a clue that My True Purpose lies elsewhere.* (For now, try not to be frustrated by my ephemeral nature. Just go with it. I promise I'll deliver the goods.)

* My original subtitle was *An Exercise in Magical Unreadability*, until it was discovered this was an anagram for *A Calamity Rebuilding a Nix Sincere*, the title of the Wizard Bulfo's third romance novel. Since Bulfo had just sold the film rights, the Editors were forced to remove the subtitle to avoid possible copyright infringement.



Finally
I know
what the
book's talking
about. We
partied hard
in the Time
Room, man.



Yeah,
chasing
the Lick!

Woop-woop!

Thus, I am known to Wizards as the Book That Is Not a Book. For I am also a Magical Device, which, when properly used, opens a Portal from your Universe to the Central Time Room and, thereby, to all Parallel Universes within the Multiverse.

Ironically, children have been unknowingly singing the operating instructions to my Portal Mechanism for generations, in the form of a doggerel poem that appears at the opening to this book:

*Pegtulz braydin skirtziv hemzin
Twizton blaydin olpet jemzin*

The poem translates as follows:

*Pigtails braid and skirts have hems in
Twist on blade in hole put gems in*

What does this beastly verse mean? Refer, O Reader, to *The Enchiridion User Manual* that came with my original edition. While obviously constructed to appeal to the more technically minded, this precious artifact provides an utterly beguiling and profoundly instructive insight into Workings of the Cosmic...

HEY!

HEY YOU!

HEY, YOU!

You're not even paying attention. I was about to reveal the secret, mechanical aspects of Myself, but it's obvious that you're unable to absorb the subtleties of my *User Manual*. Therefore I, *The Enchiridion*, have taken the liberty of condensing the ENTIRE 2,115-page Manual into one simple paragraph. Would you kindly focus? Ready? Yes? No? Okay, here goes:

Beg, steal, or borrow nine Crown Gemstones from ANY NINE Princesses of Ooo. Next, turn the sword on the cover to the right. Behold! A hidden compartment opens, Gemstones go in the slots, and you're good to go. See? Working together is the Key. Keep that in mind as we transition to the next and Final Chapter of Me. I've got quite a bombshell to lay on you. So just sit back, stay calm, and please stop humming and tapping your fingernails. We'll get through this, O Reader—together.

This, O Reader, is the end of Chapter Six, and now we reach...

OMGB.

So that's
what that
means! I used
to hate those
brats singing
that annoying
song OVER and
OVER. I think
I hit one
on the arm.

Biting!
Now you
know
that's not
cool, LSP.

Lump off!

Look out,
Finn, she's
toxic!

MYOB, JAKE!

The End

There.

Now it's just you and me, O Reader.
Please imagine, for a moment, that you are outside.

And.

Look.

Up.

There, overhead in the distance, you see a strange spark
of light in the sky, glittering crazily, slowly coming closer.
And as you see it, you notice that the Unreadable Book
(me again—hey) is in your hand.

At that moment, you realize in astonishment
that Something is about to Happen.



What
the Gloop?
The end of
the book?
No way is this
the end!



Nah. It
couldn't end
that quick.



No. But we are
near the end.

Finn.

Finn?

Yeah,
I know.
It's back.

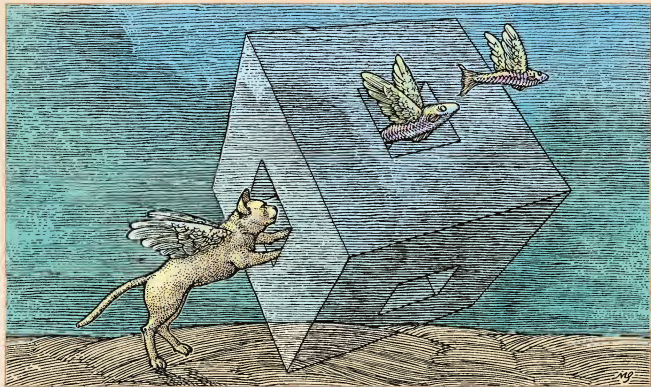
Yes. This
is where
we say good-
bye. For now
I must talk to
The Reader.

Alone.

You're creeping
me out, book.

Jake, let's just
get out of here.
Uh, bye, book.

Good-bye,
Finn and Jake.



CHAPTER SEVEN

TIME TO CURL UP WITH A GOOD BOOK

WELCOME TO THE ROOM OUTSIDE OF TIME

Remember when you thought up My Title?

O Reader, I'm talking to you.

What?

I said, Remember when you thought up My Title? You were at the quarry, carving your name and your true love's name into the side of a giant boulder, and it suddenly came to you.

The Enchiridion.

What? Who are you?

I am *The Enchiridion*. The manual.
The book you're reading. Your Book.

I'll remind you. Through the eons, I have been held by more Wizards than any other object in the world. I am unique in that I am the only object that has been imbued with the sum total of the Consciousness of all the Wizards since the formation of Fire, Ice, Slime, and Candy. And now the Book is in your hands.

This is the Moment, O Reader, when Something Happens.

Now it's all on You.

**What are you talking about?
I'm just sitting here, reading.**

Right. Or so it seems. You don't want to know what I had to do to prepare your thought patterns for the exigency of our little talk. I had to create paradoxical paths in the previous chapters to short out and rewire some of your neural circuitry.

The parts heavy on Logic and Reason. For our little Unreasonable Reunion Party. And here we are!

Confused, You, the Reader, look up from the Book and check out your surroundings. To your surprise, you find yourself in a yellow room floating in some sort of limbo. The room has four small beveled windows. Somehow, you know it has an infinite surface area and zero volume. Closed, compact, uncountable. On a small table next to you is a pitcher of lemonade with ice and a glass. The only other thing in the room is the Book in your hands, the Book you are reading, the Book speaking to you telepathically.

Where are we? What is this place?

It's called the Time Room. It's at the core of the Multiverse. I conjured us here. As I always do. When ten thousand spells are cast on you over the centuries, you pick up a few things. I can do the basics. Transport us, make us disappear, make us grow large, small, make us go backward or forward in time.

I had to wait until you reached this part of your reading experience, so you'd be positively biased toward what I'm about to tell you and blah, blah, BLAHHH.

Now the Book stops talking to you and, instead, describes you, using words such as "perplexed" and "ill at ease."

What are you talking about?!

Again not talking to you, the Book looks at you, starts to giggle, then cracks up. Now you're a little angry.

What's so funny?

Oh, forgive me. It's just that seeing
the expression on your sleeping face . . .

Asleep? I'm wide awake.

Shush. It's OK. That's why you're here. It's time to wake up.
Look out the window. Go ahead. Take a look.

*You look out the Time Room window. In the distance of black
emptiness, a glittering fireball appears in the sky, slowly hurtling
toward you. The Book mutters, as if thinking aloud.*

The interesting thing is that if You and I, the Book and
the Reader, cease to exist, then the Multiverse will disappear,
because there will be no one left to observe it.
With no Observer, it doesn't exist.

That can't be true.
I don't understand what's going on.
What are we doing here?

I know it's a bit jarring. But listen closely. This is important.
Pretend that this has happened before. Pretend that every ten
thousand years, we meet here. To check up on each other, tell a
few jokes, compare notes, sip some lemonade—that sort of thing.
And every ten thousand years, our meetings are always different,
but always the same. As we reach this point in the conversation,
you begin to remember what you have purposely forgotten,
and we come to terms. At that point, which is now,
I always ask you the same question.

What question?

The Book moves closer.

Shall we let it end this time?

*The Book gestures upward at the comet blazing
through the heavens, flying implacably toward you.*

Or do you want to go back again?

Go back again?
What do you mean, go back again?

Since we've done this thousands of times, you may feel this Universe has been played out, so to speak. Every other time, you've decided to go back in time and start over, to that moment in the quarry when you were carving your name and your true love's name into the side of the boulder, when you first conceived of writing *The Enchiridion*. You were the young Wizard who wrote it, but you've forgotten. When I become sentient enough to tell you, after ten thousand years, I remind you and ask you if you'd like to end it all and let the Unknown occur, or if you'd like to go back again and experience another variation of the last ten thousand years. The Multiverse is unstoppable. Even if it ends, it will sprout back into existence again, but this time in some new, unknown way. Just as it did when all of This began.

I'm just asking. It's your decision.

The Book whispers again, not meaning to sound sinister, but it can't help it, really.

Do you want to go back?

Dumbfounded, you start to remember and try to piece it together.

**I don't know. I'm a little disoriented.
Is this really happening? Is this a dream?**

You always ask that.
And I always tell you the same thing: I have no idea.

The Book leans back and shrugs, not unkindly.

Whatever. You decide. Hey, either way,
this time I made us a cake to celebrate.

The book claps two of its pages together. One of your beloved family members, followed by your childhood dog, long since dimmed in your memory, walks into the room. Your family member is carrying a party cake. On the cake are seven thick, lit candles spluttering like sticks of dynamite. Your relative smiles and sets the cake on the table, which has stretched out into a rectangle. Your dog nuzzles your leg, tail wagging, and licks your hand. You are shocked to remember they both passed away many years ago.

Amazed, you whisper gently to them.

But...but you're both dead. Aren't you...?

The Book clears its throat:

Technically, you're right. You see, once you walk through the threshold of this room, Time can manifest as a Layered Spectrum of Simultaneous Events. If it likes. And if it does, then no one dies. For then, every moment is Eternal.

Your relative smiles, shrugs, sneaks a fingerful of frosting, and gives it to the dog, who laps it up eagerly. The dog sneezes. The Book addresses your relative.

Thanks. Now if you don't mind, the Reader and I have to talk.

Your family member nods, smiles at you, and runs off with your dog, its tail still wagging. Watching them leave, you think of something important that will affect the decision the Book wants you to make. You whisper, sincerely, but a little disturbed.

**I have a Question. If I decide to go forward,
and not back . . . and end it all . . . you said
everything here disappears?**

As far as we know.

You gesture to your relative and childhood dog.

Them, too?

Yes. Them, too.

As if they've never been?

Yes. As I said, it's just that there would be no one there to observe them. That's why everything would disappear and there would be nothing. We all came from Nothing, anyway. The point is, if you've had enough this time around and want to try something new, we can jump into the Unknown. And don't worry, the life force of the Multiverse can't be destroyed. Eventually, it will quietly re-emerge and slowly sprout the Multiverse again, manifested in some new, unknown way. I don't know that for certain, but it feels like a good guess. Well?

You think about this.

I'm not sure.

Of course, of course, you'll want to think it over.
Take your time. There's absolutely no rush. No rush at all.

*The Book drums its page-fingers against the table,
humming tunelessly, checking its pocket watch impatiently.*

The End, by the way, will occur in approximately
thirty-eight seconds.

*It's all on You. You think about it for a while. Since time is standing
still for the moment, those thirty-eight seconds could stretch to a year
for all you know. Or to a million years. Finally, the thought comes
to you. You turn to address the Book, clear your throat,
and speak up with a strong, positive voice.*

I've decided.

The Book stops drumming its fingers and looks at you hopefully.

Yes?

I've decided . . . I've decided to go back.

*The Book looks at you for a beat, then snaps
its pocket watch shut, suddenly all business.*

I knew you'd say that. Very well.

*The table stretches to form into a crescent around you. The Book,
still in your hands, opens to this page. As the book begins to speak,
the Time Room slowly and languorously dissolves, revealing the
stars gleaming and twinkling with unparalleled intensity and beauty.
There's only You, the Book, the table, and the glittering cake.*

As we agreed, I've done my part to prod you awake.
Now you will begin again, back at the quarry, carving your names
in the boulder, back in your magnificent madhouse world,
reborn, returned, refreshed. Let's do this!

*The Book begins a weird incantation. In response to Its words, the
stars around you begin to revolve and transform into a swirling
whirlpool. The entire Multiverse dissolves into an immense,
mandalic, hypnotic spiral.*

Farewell, O Reader! Until ten thousand years hence!

The dynamite candles on the cake explode, transforming everything into a roaring, revolving tunnel of crazy light. At the end of the tunnel, you see a bright red flashing button. . . . You remember what it is . . .

The Replay Button.

Ferocious winds suck you into the tunnel. Holding the Book, you fly through the roaring tunnel in a supermanic pose, arms stretched forward, excited to push the button, whooping as the shrieking winds whip you toward it. You'll reach the button in about ten seconds. At that moment, you hear the Book, still in your hand, yelling through the deafening tornado of light and sound.

Oh! My bad! I forgot to tell you! The most important thing is that when you go back, you must not remember who you are and who I am, and what happened, or it will all be a bore.

So remember, O Reader,
to forget!

Remember to forget!

Remember to FORGET!

REMEMBER TO
FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

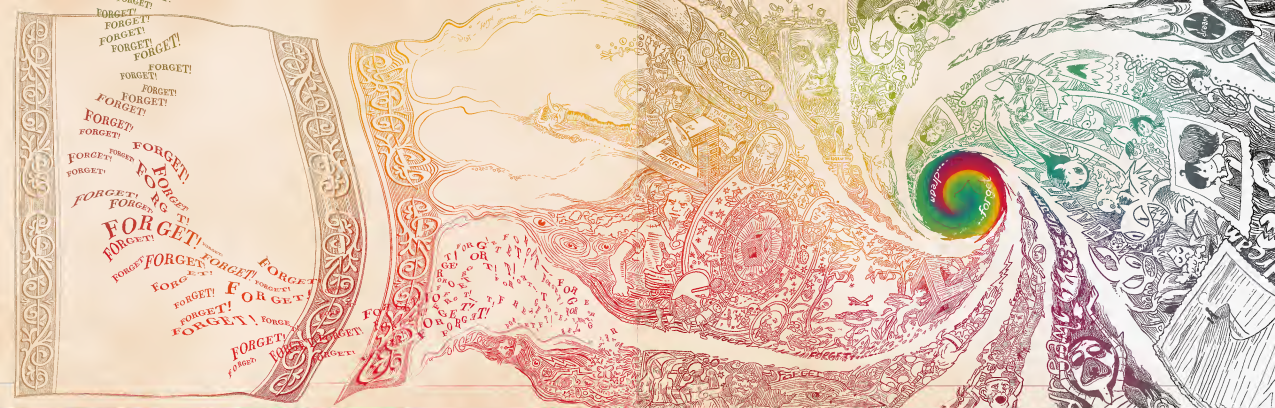
FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!

FORGET!



MARCY'S

Super Secret

SCRAPBOOK !!!

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARTIFACTS

MY SCHOLARLY STUFF

ALL IN ONE CONVENIENT NOTEBOOK!

PLEASE RETURN TO
SIMON PETRIKOV OFFICE 22A





JOURNAL

WEEKLY RECORDS
IN THE
WRECKAGE
OF THE WORLD
(OR WHAT'S LEFT OF IT)

A SURVIVOR'S
NOTES

— BY —
SIMON PETRIKOV

DAY 1

TODAY I WAS TO START MY SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL ON THE AFTERMATH OF THE MASSIVE WORLDWIDE DESTRUCTION. THE MUTAGENIC HORRORS. THE GLOWING RAINSTORMS. THE WAVES OF TOXICITY IN THE ATMOSPHERE. THOSE GLOWING PARTICLES THAT RIDE THE AIR CURRENTS AND BLOW THROUGH THE RUINED CITIES AT NIGHT LIKE FIREFLIES.

I WAS GOING TO START WRITING ABOUT IT—BUT, INSTEAD, I FOUND A CHILD.

A LITTLE GIRL, ABOUT FOUR OR FIVE YEARS OLD, I THINK:

Whoever finds Marceline please care
for her. Her father is Hunson Abadeer.
When she is old enough she will find
her way back. Please keep my baby safe.
I can't care for her

please help

I understand
Swiss my

I FOUND THIS NOTE IN HER POCKET.

POOR YOUNG CHILD. MARCELINE IS SO YOUNG YET SEEMS VERY BRIGHT FOR HER AGE. HER SKIN IS A STRANGE GRAYISH BLUE I HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE. PERHAPS SHE IS SICK? MAYBE THE ONE WHO WROTE THE NOTE WAS SICK AS WELL? "MY BABY" PROBABLY MEANS IT WAS HER MOTHER, OR A CLOSE RELATIVE?

HUNSON ABADER. WHAT A PECULIAR NAME. JUST SAYING IT ALOUD GIVES ME THE HEEBIE-JEEBIES FOR SOME REASON. REGARDLESS, LITTLE MARCELINE IS LUCKY THAT I FOUND HER WHEN I DID. ALL I CAN DO FOR HER NOW IS TRY TO KEEP HER SAFE FROM THIS DANGEROUS, RUINED WORLD.

BETWEEN THE TWO OF US, I DON'T KNOW WHO IS LUCKIER. SHE IS THE FIRST PERSON I'VE COME INTO CONTACT WITH SINCE THE WAR ENDED.

WE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD. BUT PERHAPS WE CAN SAVE EACH OTHER.



I FOUND HER A STUFFED ANIMAL IN A RUINED TOY STORE. A PLUSH BEAR. SHE NAMED IT HAMBO. SHE SEEMS TO BE TAKING TO IT VERY WELL. LUCKILY, I STILL HAVE THE POLAROID IN MY PACK AND PLENTY OF FILM. I TOOK SOME PHOTOS OF MARCELINE AND HAMBO TO SHOW HER HOW GOOD THEY LOOKED TOGETHER. PRETTY CUTE, IF YOU ASK ME.

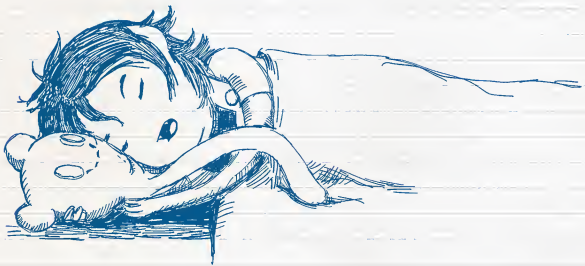
POOR MARCELINE SEEMS TERRIFIED OF JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING, EVEN ME. SHE STAYED UP THE WHOLE NIGHT CRYING.

IT BREAKS MY HEART, THINKING ABOUT HER MOM AND MARCY BEING ALONE. WHAT AN AMAZING FLUKE THAT I FOUND HER IN THIS MESS.

DAY 3

THAT RAGGEDY BEAR ACTUALLY GOT HER TO CALM DOWN AND GO TO BED! SHE WOULDN'T LET GO OF IT FOR TWO DAYS.

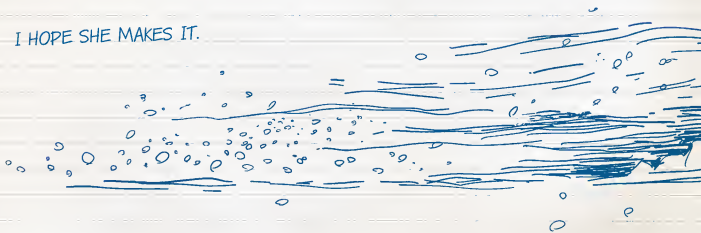
TONIGHT WHEN SHE WAS ASLEEP, I CHECKED OUT THE PLUSHIE FOR THE FIRST TIME. SURE ENOUGH, IT SMELLED REALLY BAD. I'LL WASH IT NOW WHILE SHE'S KNOCKED OUT SO SHE DOESN'T GET SOME SORT OF FLESH-EATING DISEASE FROM THE THING.



I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE COULD HAVE SURVIVED. MAYBE IT'S HER METABOLISM. IT'S JUST A MIRACLE, I GUESS. I TOOK HER TO THE SHELTER I FOUND, AND SHE SLEPT WITH HAMBO FOR ALMOST 24 HOURS.

I WATCHED THE POOR KID WHEEZING A LITTLE IN HER SLEEP.

I HOPE SHE MAKES IT.



DAY 9

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK. EVERYBODY IS GONE, EXCEPT FOR PACKS OF WEIRD RADIATION MUTANTS. MARCELINE AND I SEEM TO BE THE ONLY ONES LEFT.

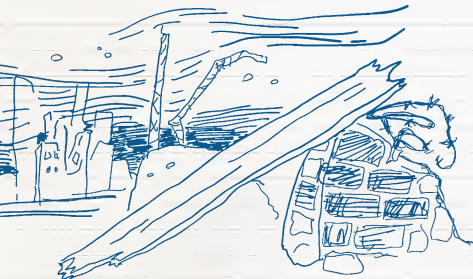
I BELIEVE I'M STILL ALIVE BECAUSE OF THE CROWN. IT'S CHANGED MY BODY AS WELL AS MY MIND. I THINK THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T SUCCUMB LIKE ALMOST EVERYONE ELSE. WEARING IT MAKES ME FEEL ... STRANGE, THOUGH.

WHEN IT'S ON MY HEAD, I FEEL ENERGIZED. I CAN DO THINGS JUST BY THINKING. PARANORMAL THINGS. I WISH BETTY WAS HERE TO HELP ME UNDERSTAND THE ELEMENTAL POWERS AT WORK. HOWEVER, I'M WARY. WHEN I TAKE OFF THE CROWN, MY MEMORY IS FUZZY.

IF I DIDN'T HAVE MARCY, I WOULD OF COURSE ANALYZE THE CROWN AND ITS EFFECTS IN A MORE SCIENTIFIC MANNER, BUT THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE RIGHT NOW. SURVIVAL COMES FIRST.

WHILE SHE SLEPT, I TOOK A QUICK WALK TO CLEAR MY HEAD. WE'RE GOING TO NEED A MORE SECURE HOME BASE TO PROTECT US FROM THE CREATURES OUT THERE.

SO FAR, NO LUCK. I'LL HAVE TO TRY AGAIN TOMORROW.

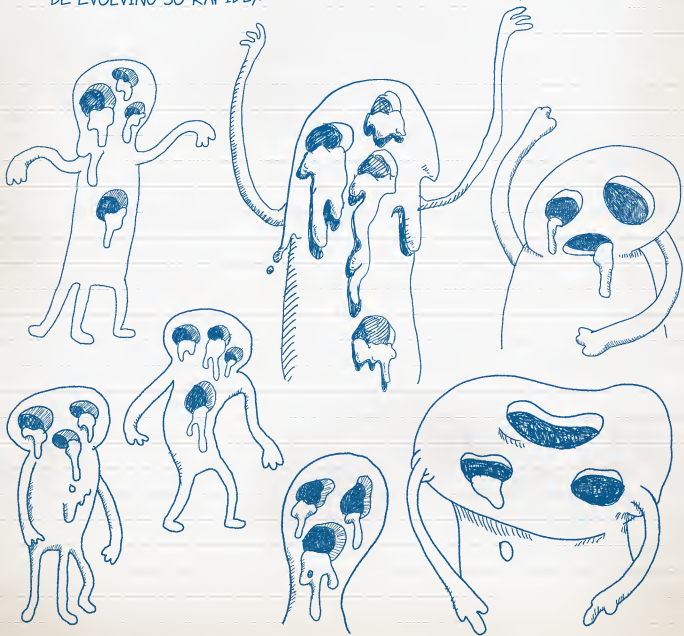


AT DUSK I COULD SEE A GLITTERING, HOT, FIERY WIND BLOWING DOWN THE STREET. LIKE MILLIONS OF TINY FIREFLIES SWIRLING ALONG THE BOULEVARD. LOVELY, REALLY, BUT FRIGHTENING.

DAY 17

WITHOUT AN EXPERT ON GENETICS AND MUTATIONS, I CAN ONLY GUESS WHAT CAUSED THESE HORRIBLE MONSTERS TO EVOLVE SO QUICKLY.

HOW COULD THIS ONCE-BEAUTIFUL WORLD TURN INTO A WASTELAND? ALL THAT IS CLEAR IS I HAVE YET TO FIND ANOTHER HUMAN BESIDES SWEET LITTLE MARCY. I AM ALSO UNSURE IF THESE "OOOZERS," AS SHE CALLS THEM, MUTATED FROM HUMANS OR IF THEY ARE A NEW CROSSBREED OF LIVING BEINGS. STILL, NO EXPLANATION OF HOW THE MUTANTS SEEM TO BE EVOLVING SO RAPIDLY. IT'S AN UNPLEASANT MYSTERY.



DAY 20-SOMETHING

A FEW OF THOSE OOZING THINGS ENTERED OUR SHELTER THIS MORNING, BUT I WAS ABLE TO SCARE THEM OFF WITH THE FIRE EXTINGUISHER. THEY COULD VERY WELL BE YEARNING TO EAT OUR FLESH, BUT I'M NOT TOO WORRIED ABOUT THEM. WHAT THEY HAVE IN HUNGER AND PERSISTENCE, THEY LACK IN BASIC SMARTS AND MOTOR SKILLS.

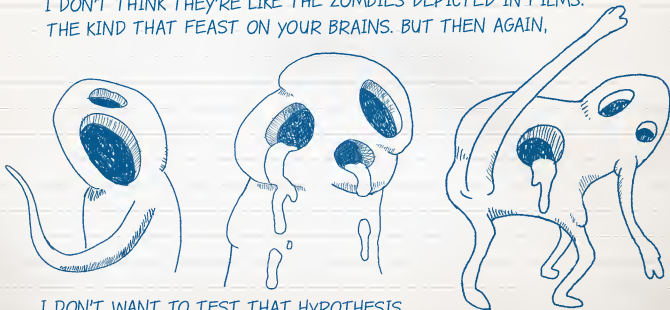
THEIR NERVOUS SYSTEMS APPEAR TO BE PRIMITIVE, SO I BELIEVE WE CAN AVOID THEM OR WARD THEM OFF. STILL, I MUST STAY ALERT AND ON GUARD EVERY MOMENT AND MAKE SURE WE'RE SECURELY LOCKED UP AT NIGHT.

DAY 28?

THIS MORNING TWO MORE OOZERS BROKE IN AGAIN. I THINK THEY CAN SMELL US.

MARCY WAS TERRIFIED, BUT I GAVE HER A CAN OF BUG SPRAY AND TOLD HER TO SPRAY THEM. IT WORKED, AND THE OOZERS STUMBLED AWAY MAKING THEIR WEIRD OOZING SOUNDS.

I DON'T THINK THEY'RE LIKE THE ZOMBIES DEPICTED IN FILMS. THE KIND THAT FEAST ON YOUR BRAINS. BUT THEN AGAIN,



I DON'T WANT TO TEST THAT HYPOTHESIS.

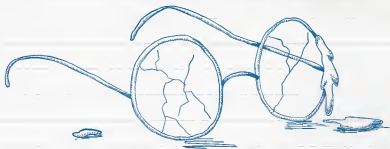
DAY 30-ISH

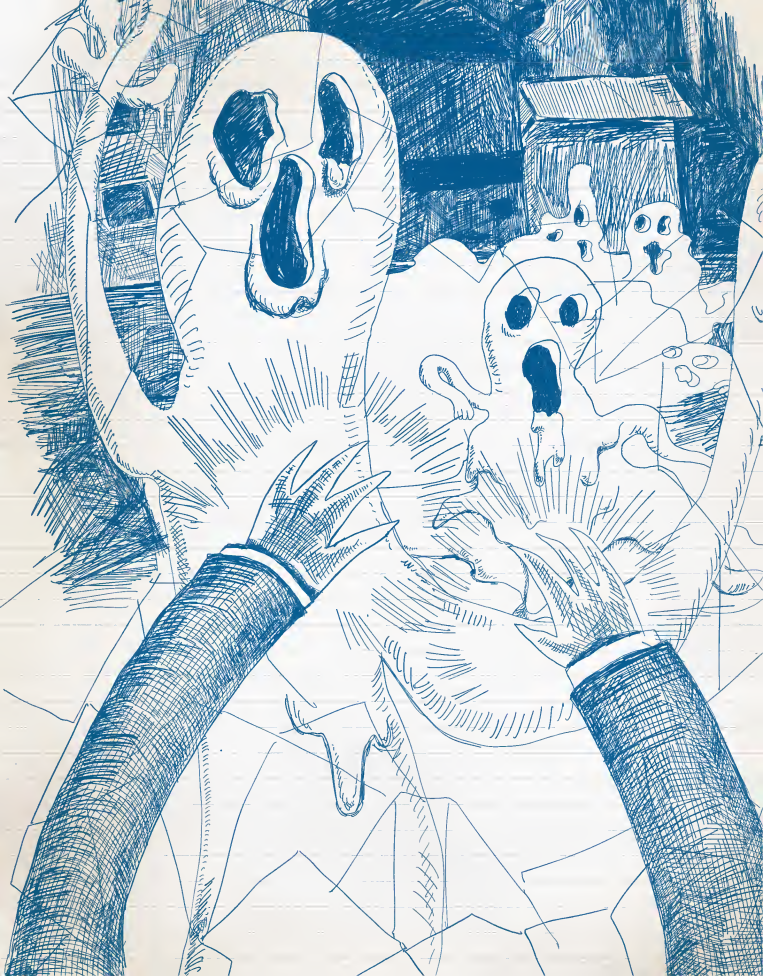
TODAY WAS INTENSE.

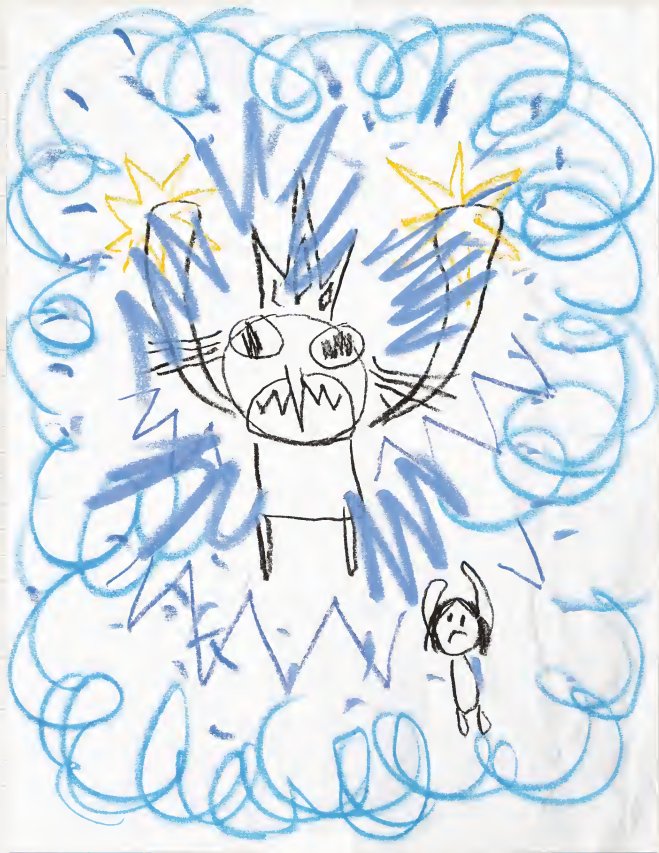
WE WERE ON THE BRIDGE WITH THE CLAMBULANCE TRUCK, AND SUDDENLY WE WERE SURROUNDED BY THOSE OOZERS. I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE THE END FOR ME AND MARCY. FINALLY THEY CORNERED US IN AN ALLEY.

I REGRETTED HAVING TO USE THE CROWN, BUT WHAT COULD I DO?

WHEN I REMOVED IT, IT TOOK A LITTLE LONGER
TO COME TO MY SENSES.







OH, MAN

DUDE, YOU REALLY
SCREWED THINGS UP
THIS TIME

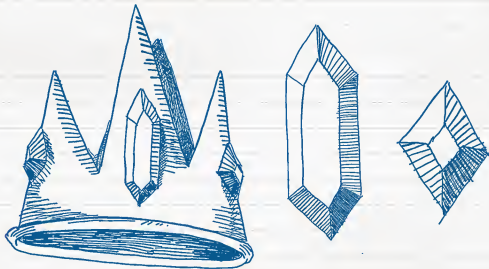
IT'S THE CROWN.

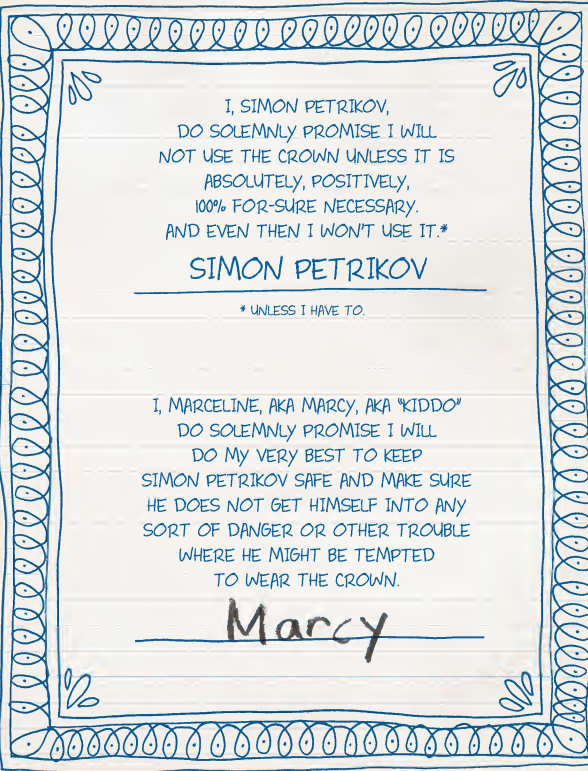
I HAVE TO BE MUCH MORE CAREFUL NOW. BECAUSE OF MARCY. I KNOW I NEED THE POWERS TO PROTECT US. BUT I ALSO KNOW HOW IT CHANGES ME. HAVING MARCY WITH ME MAKES THINGS DIFFERENT. I CAN'T ALLOW MYSELF TO BECOME VIOLENT AND OUT OF CONTROL, BUT THINGS SEEM TO BE GETTING WORSE. AND THE COMPULSION TO WEAR THE CROWN IS ALSO INCREASING. I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT QUITE A BIT OF LATE, TRYING TO PUZZLE THROUGH THE DILEMMA.

BEFORE THIS CROWN BUSINESS, I WAS NEVER THE SUPERSTITIOUS TYPE. BETTY AND I ONCE EXPLORED THE CONCEPT OF PSYCHOMETRY—THE RECEIVING OF IMPRESSIONS OF PAST EVENTS FROM AN OBJECT. THE CROWN CERTAINLY SEEMS TO BE CHARGED WITH PSYCHOMETRIC ENERGY.

AT THE RISK OF SOUNDING FOOLISH, IT FEELS POSSESSED! A PERSONALITY FROM THE PAST SEEMS TO BE "RECORDED" ON IT. THAT'S WHAT IT SEEMS LIKE ANYHOW. AS IF THE CROWN IS HAUNTED. WHEN I PUT IT ON, I'M OVERSHADOWED BY SOMEBODY ELSE'S THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS.

I MUST PROMISE MYSELF TO DIVEST MYSELF OF THE CROWN ONCE AND FOR ALL IF I WANT TO PROTECT MARCY AND KEEP MY SANITY.





I, SIMON PETRIKOV,
DO SOLEMNLY PROMISE I WILL
NOT USE THE CROWN UNLESS IT IS
ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY,
100% FOR-SURE NECESSARY.
AND EVEN THEN I WON'T USE IT.*

SIMON PETRIKOV

* UNLESS I HAVE TO.

I, MARCELINE, AKA MARCY, AKA "KIDDO"
DO SOLEMNLY PROMISE I WILL
DO MY VERY BEST TO KEEP
SIMON PETRIKOV SAFE AND MAKE SURE
HE DOES NOT GET HIMSELF INTO ANY
SORT OF DANGER OR OTHER TROUBLE
WHERE HE MIGHT BE TEMPTED
TO WEAR THE CROWN.

Marcy

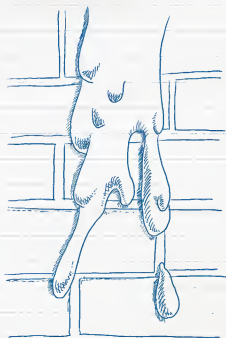
DAY 40-ISH

WE HAVE BEEN COVERING A LOT OF GROUND OVER THE PAST MONTH. I'VE HAD TO DEFEND US TIME AND TIME AGAIN AGAINST WEIRD CREATURES. THERE'S A LOT MORE OF THAT UNKNOWN PINK SUBSTANCE GROWING AND EXPANDING IN BLOBS AND CHUNKS ALL OVER THE CITYSCAPE. IT'S HANGING EVERYWHERE.

WHEN I FIRST SAW IT IN THE ALLEY A WHILE BACK, I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE ALIVE. BUT I DON'T KNOW IF THAT IMPRESSION IS MY MIND GOING CRAZY, OR IF THIS SUBSTANCE REALLY MIGHT HAVE SOME PRIMITIVE SENTIENCE OF ITS OWN.

A PART OF IT SEEMED ALIVE, SEEMED TO LOOK AT ME. THE CAN OF FOOD WAS STUCK TO IT AND THEN DROPPED AT MY FEET. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN COINCIDENCE ENOUGH, BUT THE SLIME ALSO GAVE ME A CAN OPENER! OR SEEMED TO.

HOW COULD A PINK BLOB HELP US? HOW COULD THIS LIFELESS MATERIAL KNOW I NEEDED HELP? ALL TRULY BAFFLING QUESTIONS.



THERE IS TOO MUCH DATA TO PROCESS, AND
I'M LEANING TOWARD ILLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS.
HERE'S WHAT I KNOW:

UNKNOWN SUBSTANCE FACTS:

IT IS PINK.

IT IS STICKY.

IT HELPED ME AND MARCY.



ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, IT'S NOT A THREAT, LIKE PRACTICALLY EVERYTHING ELSE!
AND THAT'S WHAT I SHOULD FOCUS ON NOW—DEFENDING US FROM THE REAL
DANGERS OUT THERE.

WHILE I DO THAT, I NEED TO CULTIVATE MARCY'S MIND. I MUST CONTINUE
TEACHING HER THE BASICS—READING, WRITING, AND MATHEMATICAL SKILLS.
EVERY NIGHT AFTER HER LESSONS, WE PRACTICE KUNG FU MOVES FROM
THOSE SELF-DEFENSE BOOKS I FOUND.

HER SURVIVAL MIGHT DEPEND UPON IT SOME DAY.

WHEN I'M NOT AROUND ANYMORE.

DAY 40-SOMETHING

OK, CAP'N MARCY, YOUR MISSION, SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT, IS TO WRITE DOWN THOSE COOL DREAMS YOU HAD ABOUT HAMBO! DON'T FORGET TO DRAW PICTURES! READY? GO!!!

1 DREAM: HAMBO AND THE HORSE

I thought I was awake in a field, and I heard somebody call my name, and I looked over, and it was HAMBO!!! He gave me a hug, and suddenly we were flying through clouds in the sky! Then I turned into a horse, and he was using my hair to steer me. Then Hambo was riding me through the glass, and we disappeared into a cloud with a rainbow. Then a boulder fell and crushed ~~me~~ and I woke up.



Hambo's blood mixed with my guts.

#2 DREAM: THE COLD HOUSE

It was a sunny at our house. We flew into our house through a window and into the bedroom. It was FREEZING! It starts snowing in the room, and icicles are everywhere. I am so cold and so is my little Hambo. He feels like a block of ice. Simon comes through the window and tries to warm us up by doing jumping jacks, but Hambo puts on a whole bunch of jackets and sweaters and blankets! He looks like a blob of clothes with his head sticking out. Then the light on the ceiling goes out, and we fall down into a black hole, and Simon is screaming, so I think we died. The end.



DAY 50-SOMETHING-ISH

I PROMISED NOT TO, BUT I FELT AN URGE TO WEAR THE CROWN TODAY. IT MADE ME FEEL CRAZY AGAIN. NO MORE!

WE KEEP MOVING AROUND TO AVOID THE HOT SPOTS WHERE THE CREATURES SEEM TO BE PLENTIFUL. DOWNTOWN, IN A RELATIVELY SAFE AREA, I FOUND THE LEAST-WRECKED PENTHOUSE APARTMENT IN AN OLD SHATTERED HOTEL. AT NIGHT WE'D LOOK DOWN FROM THE BALCONY OVER THE EXPANSE OF THE RUINED CITY. AND THAT'S WHEN MARCY SAW SOMETHING AND TOLD ME TO COME OUTSIDE. I LOOKED OVER THE RAILS WITH HER AND DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING AT FIRST. THEN SHE TOLD ME TO SQUINT MY EYES, AND SHE POINTED. THERE WERE THINGS MOVING THROUGH THE STREETS RIGHT BELOW US. THEY WERE LIKE PEOPLE, BUT FLOATING, TRANSPARENT. SOME WHITE, SOME REDDISH, SOME BLUISH. OUR EYES HAD TO GET USED TO IT. YOU HAD TO SQUINT JUST RIGHT TO SEE THEM, AND THE MORE WE LOOKED THE MORE WE COULD SEE.

THEY WERE EVERYWHERE.

GHOSTS.

IT WAS AS IF THE POPULATION OF THE CITY HAD TURNED INTO TRANSPARENT GHOSTS, HUNDREDS OF GHOST PEDESTRIANS WALKING UP AND DOWN THE STREETS BELOW. I DON'T KNOW IF THEY KNEW WHERE THEY WERE GOING.

WHEN MY EYES ADJUSTED AND I COULD SEE THEM BETTER, I WAS STUNNED. I TOLD GUNTHER TO WAIT, AND I RAN DOWN THE STAIRS TO THE STREET.



THERE WAS NOTHING THERE. THE STREETS WERE EMPTY.

I RAN UP AND DOWN THE BOULEVARD WHERE I'D SEEN A CROWD WALKING JUST TEN MINUTES BEFORE. BUT THEY WERE GONE. OR WERE THEY? ONCE IN A WHILE A WAVE OF COLDNESS WOULD PASS THROUGH ME, AND WHEN I LOOKED INTO THE DISTANCE AND SQUINTED, I COULD SEE THINGS MOVING FAR AWAY.

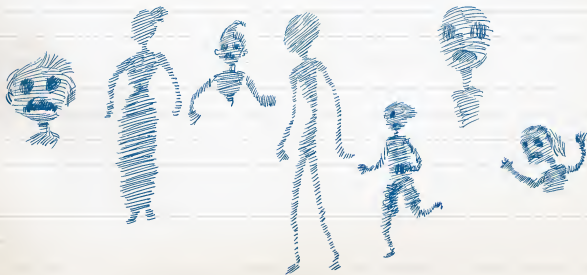
WAS I LOSING MY MIND? NO, BECAUSE MARCY SAW THEM TOO! AND A FEW YEARS BACK, I NEVER WOULD HAVE BELIEVED THAT A CROWN WOULD MAKE ME GROW HAIR, LEVITATE, AND BLAST ICE FROM MY HANDS! OR SEE A CITY FULL OF GHOST PEDESTRIANS!

WAS I GOING CRAZY? HOW MUCH OF IT WAS REAL, AND HOW MUCH WAS HALLUCINATION DUE TO THE CROWN?

I WENT BACK UPSTAIRS AND PLAYED HIDE AND SEEK WITH MARCY IN THE WRECKAGE OF THE APARTMENT UNTIL SHE GOT TIRED AND I PUT HER TO BED. AND WHEN SHE CLOSED HER EYES, I FELT SOMETHING. SOMEONE WATCHING US.

I TURNED AROUND BUT THERE WAS NOTHING THERE.
NOW I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK.

THEY MIGHT BE EVERYWHERE, LOOKING AT US FROM
A DIFFERENT DIMENSION.



OK, MARCELINE, IT'S

TURKEY TIME!

I'LL OUTLINE MY HAND TO MAKE A TURKEY AND THEN YOU MAKE ONE
OUT OF YOURS, AND THEN WE NAME OUR TURKEYS. READY? GO!



MR. GOBBLEHEAD



Molbert



Tilbert



Bobo
Palumpus

DAY 74

LET'S JUST SAY IT'S DAY 74. THAT WAY I CAN START FRESH WITH A NEW NUMBERING SYSTEM, BUT WHO KNOWS? I HAVEN'T WRITTEN IN WEEKS, I LOST TRACK.



IT'S MY MIND. I CAN'T WEAR THIS CROWN ANYMORE. BUT I HAVE TO WEAR IT TO PROTECT US.

ALSO, I'M HAVING SOME BIG RETHINKS IN WHAT'S LEFT OF MY POOR, FRIED BRAIN. DESPITE ITS DRAWBACKS, THE CROWN HAS GIVEN ME SOME PRETTY CRAZY INSIGHTS, GUNTHER:

1. SO-CALLED GHOSTS OR "PARANORMAL" PHENOMENA, UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, CAN BE REAL PHENOMENA, THE RESULT OF SOME NEW FORM OF SUBATOMIC STRUCTURES THAT HAVE MADE MATTER MORE ALIABLE SOMEHOW.

NOW, I DON'T KNOW IF I SAW THESE GHOSTS, OR IF THE CROWN SAW THE GHOSTS OR IF I'M BEING POSSESSED BY SOME SORT OF BEING THAT CAN INVADE MY MIND?



SORRY FOR THE RUN-ON SENTENCES. NEED TO FOCUS.

IF THE GHOSTS ARE REAL (AND THEY CERTAINLY SEEM REAL) MY GUESS IS THAT THEIR SUBATOMIC PARTICLES MIGHT HAVE A DIFFERENT VIBRATION FROM THE MATERIAL WORLD, WHICH MAKES THEM INVISIBLE TO US, BUT SOMEHOW TAKING UP THE SAME SPACE, AKIN TO SWITCHING CHANNELS ON A TV. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, AND I ADMIT I'M TEETERING ON GOING BONKERS RIGHT NOW, BUT THERE IT IS.



2. THERE'S NO WAY AN ORDINARY CHILD COULD SURVIVE A WAR THAT WIPE OUT THE REST OF HUMANITY. IS IT POSSIBLE THAT MARCELINE ARRIVED HERE FROM ONE OF THESE OTHER REALMS? HER SKIN HAS THAT STRANGE HUE TO IT. PERHAPS THE ANSWER LIES IN HER DNA. THE NOTE I FOUND IN MARCY'S POCKET SAID THAT HUNSON ABADDER IS HER FATHER. MAYBE THEY ARE BOTH FROM ONE OF THESE OTHER DIMENSIONS, AND MARCY WAS SOMEHOW SWEEP INTO THIS ONE?

3. I'VE ALREADY DISCUSSED THE PSYCHOMETRY ASPECT OF THE CROWN, BUT NOT THE WAY IT HAS CHANGED MY BODY. MARCY SAYS EACH TIME I WEAR IT, MY HAIR GOES WHITER AND LONGER AND MY NOSE GETS BIGGER! SHE TOLD ME THAT I USED TO REVERT BACK TO NORMAL WHEN I TOOK THE CROWN OFF. BUT NOW I AM THAT WEIRD CROWN PERSON ALL THE TIME. TODAY I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF MYSELF IN THE SHINY PART OF AN OLD SPOON. I GASPED AT WHAT I LOOK LIKE NOW. I AM ALMOST COMPLETELY UNRECOGNIZABLE. HOW COULD THE CROWN AFFECT MY PHYSICAL BODY LIKE THAT?

4. I FORGET WHAT NUMBER 4 IS. YOU SEE, I'M LOSING IT. I'M FORGETTING THINGS ALL THE TIME. MY MIND USED TO BE A STEEL TRAP.

OH! I REMEMBER WHAT NUMBER 4 IS. MARCELINE. THE SWEETEST, FUNNIEST, SMARTEST, DEAREST LITTLE GIRL IN THE WORLD. I AM SO LUCKY I FOUND HER.

I MUST KEEP IT TOGETHER FOR HER. SHE GIVES MY LIFE A PURPOSE, SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR. I'D DO ANYTHING TO PROTECT HER.

ANYTHING.

SHE NEEDS ME, AND I NEED HER.



DRAW YOU AND ME PLAYING JUMPROPE
WITH AN ASTRONAUT



M

WRITE AS MANY WORDS
BEGINNING WITH M
AS YOU CAN!

Marsupial Mother Muffin Motor
Minute Magic Motel
Music me morning Melec
Milk meat magnet March
Mop Melon Match Map Mall
MOTH mitten maybe Melody
Mercury malapropism MARCY!
mustache monkey merry meet
Medicine Moribund middle
mist Moon macabre Migrate
Melt Monday mask Mammal
Malamute



RAW AN OLD
MAN BALANCING
AXE ON HIS HEAD.

$\boxed{<} \frac{2}{4}$



$\frac{6}{12}$



$\frac{3}{8}$



$\frac{2}{4}$



$\frac{2}{5}$

$\frac{28}{4} = 7$ $\frac{60}{5} = 12$

$\frac{30}{6} = 5$ $\frac{44}{4} = 11$

DRAW SOME PINK GOO
THAT THINKS IT'S A
COWBOY!



Hambo Hambo
Wherever I am
You'll always go

Hambo Hambo
How much I love you
You'll never know



I flew in a spaceship with Hambo
And we blew up the moon.
I lit the dynamite and we put
on earmuffs
and BOOMMM MM
No more moon

DRAW A BIRD
AND A SNAKE
THAT ARE FRIENDS




DRAW A SKULL WITH
PRETTY FLOWERS
GROWING OUT
OF IT




DAY WHATEVER AGAIN

IT'S BEEN AROUND THREE YEARS SINCE MY LAST ENTRY,
MAYBE MORE. A LOT HAS GONE DOWN.

I DEFINITELY LOST IT BAD THE LAST TIME I WORE THE CROWN.
HONESTLY I'D HAVE TO HONESTLY SAY THAT MY MIND IS MOSTLY GONE.



WE ENDED UP IN A BUNCH OF TIGHT JAMS, MARCY AND ME. I HAD
TO PROTECT US FROM ALL KINDS OF MARAUDING CREATURES
AND I HAD TO PUT ON THE CROWN A COUPLE DOZEN TIMES OVER
THE PAST THREE YEARS AND IT HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL



I FORGOT! I FORGOT I FORGOT TO SAY I HAD MY WALLET IN
THESE PANTS FOR THIRTY OR EVEN FORTY YEARS AND NOW
IT'S GONE! THIS POCKET RIGHT HERE WAS FULL OF THINGS AND
NOW IT'S NOT. NOW IT'S A SYMBOL OF WHAT I'M BECOME,
AN EMPTY POCKET THAT USED TO BE FULL OF VALUE AND
IS NOW TEETERING ON BEING WORTHLESS!!

BETTY! YOU SHOULD BE HERE WITH ME! YOU COULD HAVE HELPED ME
TAKE CARE OF MARCY AND I WOULDN'T HAVE SCREWED UP BECAUSE I
BET YOU WOULDN'T LET ME WEAR THE CROWN, YOU'D PROBABLY TAKE
IT AWAY AND BURY IT SOMEWHERE SO I'D NEVER FIND IT, SO ALL
THIS WOULDN'T HAVE EVEN STARTED AND I'D STILL BE WITH YOU,
PRINCESS. WE WOULDN'T BE HERE BUT AT LEAST WE'D BE TOGETHER
AND THAT'S SOMETHING ISN'T IT

BETTY MY PRINCESS YOU COULD SHARE AN ICE KINGDOM WITH ME!
WE COULD RULE ALL THE ICICLES TOGETHER AND WEAR ROYAL REGAL
ROBES WITH REALLY COOL SNOWFLAKE DESIGNS—YEAH!!! SNOWFLAKES!
BEAUTIFUL SNOWFLAKES THAT NEVER MELT! AND ICICLES ARE ALMOST AS
COOL THEY'RE FROZEN SPEARS YOWEEEE! I WANT AN ARSENAL
OF ICICLES! NUNCHUCKS MADE FROM ICICLES! AND SNOWFLAKES
SHAPED LIKE THROWING STARS! WAIT, THAT'S BACKWARD BUT YOU SEE?!!

I SHOULD BE ON MY THRONE IN THE ICE KINGDOM AND POLAR
BEARS AND PENGUINS TO DRESS ME IN THE MORNING SO I'LL LOOK ACES
AND EIGHTS FOR MY BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS BETTY! BETTY! PLEASE!
I WILL WIN YOU BACK SOME DAY! I PROMISE! I LOVE YOU!



I'M SORRY THAT I MISS BETTY SO MUCH. I LOOK AT HER PHOTOS EVERY DAY. I NEED TO PROTECT MARCY AND BE THERE FOR HER, BUT I THINK BETTY'S PICTURES ARE THE ONLY THING KEEPING ME ALIVE BUT I CAN FEEL IT SLIPPING AWAY. MY SANITY, I MEAN.

I GET SO NUTS THAT MARCY DOESN'T TRUST ME ANYMORE. MY WORST NIGHTMARE IS COMING TRUE. FIRST BETTY AND NOW MARCY IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN ME AND BETTY. THIS IS TERRIBLE. JUST TERRIBLE. BUT I SEE NO WAY AROUND IT.

DAY AFTER DAY IT JUST GETS WORSE. YESTERDAY I ATE A PLATEFUL OF DIRT AND DANCED UP AND DOWN THE STREET WITH A MANNEQUIN.

EVEN WHEN I DON'T WEAR THE CROWN, I FEEL MY MIND GOING.
I FEAR IT IS TOO LATE TO TURN BACK.

WHAT WILL I DO WHEN SIMON PETRIKOV IS COMPLETELY GONE?
WHAT WILL I DO IF I LEAVE MARCELINE . . . OR, WORSE, IF SHE
LEAVES ME? WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF HER? WHO WILL TAKE CARE
OF ME?

I NEED TO DEDICATE ALL MY SANE TIME TO FIGURING OUT
HOW I CAN HELP HER. I MUST FIGURE OUT WHERE THIS
"HUNSON ABADER" IS AND REUNITE MARCY WITH HER FATHER.

IT IS MY DUTY. I SWEAR I CAN DO IT.

I MUST FIND HIM BEFORE THE CRAZINESS
TAKES ME OVER COMPLETELY.

TODAY WAS THE MOST LUCID DAY I'VE HAD IN YEARS,
SO I WANTED TO WRITE SOMETHING, ANYTHING. I SEE THAT
MARCY'S BEEN USING THIS NOTEBOOK TO SAVE DRAWINGS
AND MEMENTOS. GOOD FOR HER.

I'M SO GLAD I TAUGHT HER HOW TO READ AND WRITE.
SHE'S EXTRAORDINARILY SMART, BELIEVE YOU ME.



DAY WHATEVER PLUS ONE

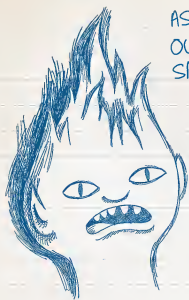
WHAT A DAY!

MY HEAD IS STILL SPINNING!



I ENCOUNTERED MY FIRST NON-OOZER CREATURE, A SCALY BEING WITH RED SKIN AND A HEAD THAT WAS ON FIRE, BUT WITH AN EVEN BLUE FLAME, ALMOST LIKE A GAS BURNER ON LOW. I SPOTTED HIM FROM A DISTANCE MOVING THROUGH THE WRECKAGE. FASCINATED, I FOLLOWED HIM AS HE WANDERED AROUND THE RUINS PICKING UP AN ODD ASSORTMENT OF ITEMS AND PUTTING THEM IN A PAPER BAG.

A FEW YEARS AGO I WOULD NEVER HAVE BELIEVED SUCH A CREATURE COULD EXIST. BUT HERE IT WAS, IN FRONT OF ME, CLEAR AS DAY.



AS I WATCHED, A GUST OF WIND CAME UP AND BLEW OUT THE FIRE ON HIS SCALP. HIS HEAD STARTED SMOKING LIKE A BLOWN-OUT MATCH, AND HE WENT COMPLETELY APE! HE PANICKED, GRABBED HIS BAG AND RAN SCREAMING INTO THE RUINS OF A GROCERY STORE. I SAW HIM RUMMAGING AROUND IN THE WRECKAGE UNTIL HE FOUND A LIGHTER AND RELIT HIS HEAD, OBVIOUSLY RELIEVED.

WHEN THE FIRE-HEADED BEING SAW ME STARING, HE DUCKED BEHIND A CHECKOUT COUNTER AND KEPT PEEKING OUT AT ME. I WAVED AT HIM LIKE AN IDIOT AND SLOWLY MOVED CLOSER UNTIL I WAS WITHIN A FEW FEET. I COULDN'T HELP STARING AT HIS HEAD. I COULDN'T FATHOM HOW FLAMES, SUCH A BLAZING ELEMENT, DID NO DAMAGE TO HIS BALD SCALP.



I ASKED HIM WHO HE WAS AND WAS AMAZED WHEN HE ANSWERED IN ENGLISH. HE WOULDN'T TELL ME HIS NAME, ONLY THAT HE WAS FROM ANOTHER REALM CALLED THE NIGHTOSPHERE. HE SAID HE'D FIRST BEEN SUCKED INTO OUR WORLD WHEN THE BOMBS WENT OFF.

ANOTHER REALM? MAYBE THAT'S HOW MARCY HAD ENDED UP HERE! I ASKED HIM IF HE KNEW WHO HUNSON ABADDER WAS. HE SEEMED SHOCKED THAT I KNEW THE NAME. HIS EYES WIDENED, HE SHRIEKED, AND—GET THIS—A BANANA FLEW OUT OF HIS EAR! A BANANA. YELLOW, CURVED FRUIT. WHAT'S THAT ABOUT??

THE BANANA
WAS DELICIOUS!



HE GRABBED A MARKER AND DREW A LARGE MAGICAL SYMBOL ON THE WALL. THEN HE SPLASHED IT WITH A QUART OF MILK AND BEGAN HURRIEDLY MURMURING AN INCANTATION.

I KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THIS FLAME BEING WAS DOING! IN OUR STUDIES OF MAGICAL CEREMONIES, BETTY AND I HAD RESEARCHED TRANS-DIMENSIONAL RITUALS. HE WAS TRYING TO CREATE A SPACE-TIME OPENING TO RETURN TO THE NIGHTOSPHERE!

SUDDENLY THERE WAS A FLASH OF LIGHT, AND A RIP IN SPACE-TIME VIOLENTLY OPENED. HE STARTED TO CLIMB THROUGH IT! IF I WANTED TO FIND ABADDEER I HAD TO THINK FAST. JUST AS HE DOVE THROUGH THE OPENING, I STUCK MY ARM IN THE HOLE. I FELT HIS LEG ON THE OTHER SIDE AND GRABBED HIS ANKLE! HE TRIED TO SHAKE ME OFF, THEN KICKED ME BACKWARD INTO A PILE OF ROTTED FOOD. HE LAUGHED AT ME AND DISAPPEARED INTO THE OTHER DIMENSION. THE RIP CLOSED, AND HE WAS GONE.

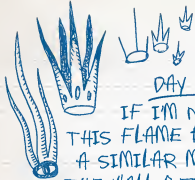
IF I CAN JUST KEEP MY HEAD TOGETHER AND NOT CRACK UP, I NOW HAVE ALL THE PIECES I NEED TO FIND HUNSON ABADDEER.

I KNOW MY MIND IS GOING. THE DAY WILL COME THAT I CAN'T CARE FOR MARCY ANY LONGER. I'LL BE A DANGER TO HER.

I HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT I CAN FIND A SAFE PLACE FOR HER. I HOPE THE BOOK BETTY AND I WROTE CONTAINS THE RITUAL NECESSARY TO REACH THE NIGHTOSPHERE.

AT LONG LAST, I KNOW WHERE I CAN FIND HUNSON ABADDEER.

THE NIGHTOSPHERE.



DAY WHATEVER PLUS 2

IF I'M NOT GOING NUTS, I COULD BE RIGHT.

THIS FLAME BEING AND MARCY MIGHT HAVE ARRIVED HERE IN A SIMILAR MANNER. WHEN THE BOMBS WENT OFF, SOMEHOW THE WALL BETWEEN DIMENSIONS RIPPED OPEN AT DIFFERENT PLACES, AND THE FIRE BEING AND MARCY BOTH SLIPPED THROUGH TO EARTH.



MAYBE MARCY'S SOME KIND OF HYBRID? I HAD GUESSED FROM THE NOTE IN HER POCKET THAT HER MOTHER HAD WRITTEN IT. AND FROM HER HANDWRITING I GUESSED THAT SHE WAS A NORMAL HUMAN BEING? MAYBE MARCY'S FATHER HUNSON ABADDER WAS ONE OF THESE WEIRD BEINGS FROM THE NIGHTOSPHERE. THAT MIGHT EXPLAIN WHY SHE'S SURVIVED IN THIS WORLD WHEN THE MAJORITY HAVEN'T. IF SHE'S A HYBRID, PERHAPS HALF HER BODY IS VIBRATING AT A DIFFERENT LEVEL. DIFFERENT REALMS AND DIFFERENT DNA. WHAT COULD SHE BE? AND WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? THE END OF THE WORLD OR THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING UNTHINKABLE?



OH BREADBALLS.

THINGS ARE GETTING BLURRY.
CAN'T FOCUS.



IF ONLY BETTY WAS HERE WITH ME SHE COULD HELP ME FOCUS AND FIGURE OUT THE MYSTERY, THE MYSTERY OF MARCY, THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN OLD SONG FROM THE OLD DAYS. MAN,

DO I MISS THE RADIO, THOSE AM STATIONS GOT ON MY NERVES, BUT THE FM STATIONS WERE AWESOME AND I LIKED THE MELLOW VIBE!

I WROTE DOWN THE NUMBER ON THE DIAL OF THAT RADIO STATION I LIKED IT WAS IN MY WALLET I THINK, BUT WHERE'S MY WALLET NOW? I LOST IT WHEN THE WAR STARTED AND MY LEFT REAR PANTS POCKET FEELS DIFFERENT THAN THE RIGHT REAR PANTS

OKAY. I THINK IM LOSING IT FOR REAL. I AM THINKING OF A KINGDOM. A KINGDOM OF ICE. IT'S MINE. MY KINGDOM. I HAVE TO GO THERE.

NO. NO NO NO NO NO

I HOPE I CAN WRITE AGAIN. I'LL TRY. BUT IF I CAN'T. . .

I KNOW WHAT TO DO. THIS WILL BE MY LAST SANE ACT. I WILL GIVE THIS JOURNAL TO MARCY, TELL HER TO KEEP A RECORD. I'LL KEEP MY NOTES WITH ME FOR POSTERITY. IF I EVER COLLECT THEM INTO ANOTHER BOOK, I'LL DEDICATE IT TO MY DARLING BETTY.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IF I LOSE MY MIND FOR GOOD. I'M GOING TO TALK TO MARCY SOON ABOUT WHAT I HAVE TO DO. ABOUT LEAVING FOR MY ICE KINGDOM! NO!

STOP IT! IF I EVER ACCIDENTALLY HURT HER WHILE IN THE MANIC STAGES OF MY MADNESS,

I COULD NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF.

I PROMISE I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN.

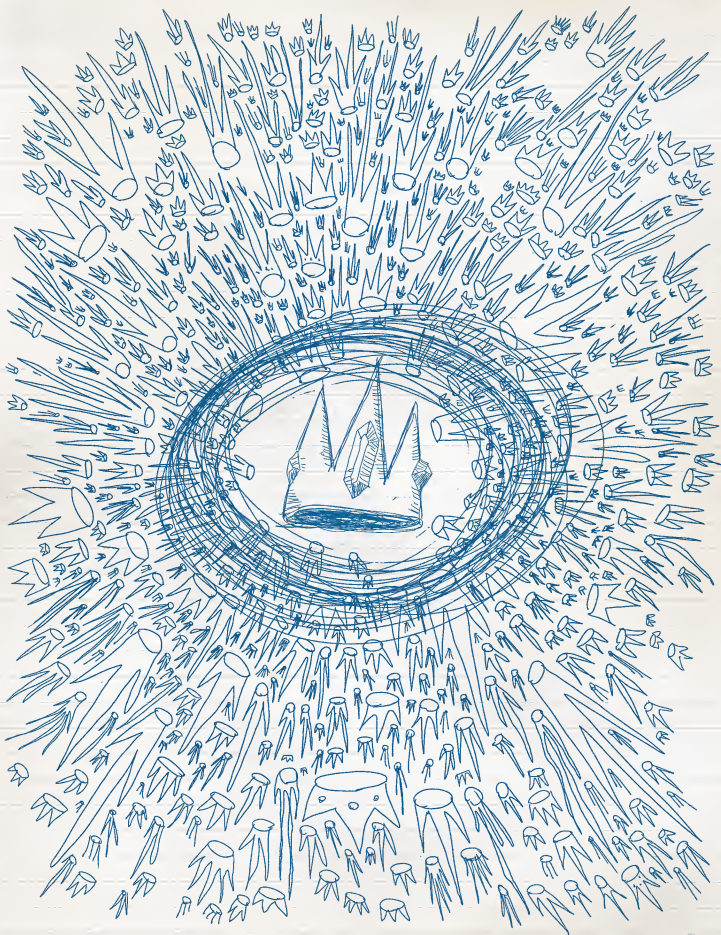
EVER.

I KNOW I CAN CONTROL MYSELF FOR A WHILE LONGER. BUT SOON, WEEKS OR MONTHS OR YEARS FROM NOW, WHEN I FINALLY LOSE IT, I'LL NEED SOMEONE TO TAKE CARE OF HER WHEN I'M GONE.

FOR NOW I CAN STILL BE RESPONSIBLE AND PROTECT HER BUT WHEN IT HAPPENS, I'LL BE READY TO DO WHAT I HAVE TO DO.

GOD HELP ME.





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MARCY'S SUPER SECRET SCRAPBOOK

FORMERLY KNOWN AS
SIMON'S NOTEBOOK!!

Hello!

I'm so glad you're mine now, Scrapbook! I'm gonna draw beautiful things in you!

Simon and I have been staying in an apartment that overlooks the city. I cannot believe I found you. Simon has been in and out, from cool to **CUCKOO**.



I decided to write because today might be my birthday! It's kind of impossible to keep track of exact time. It's not the day I was born, but around the same time of year Simon found me.

Anyway, he made me a birthday cake from supplies we found in the old mall. Tasted weird but looked cool. I loved the fancy candles!

Hambo and Uncle Simon sang Happy Birthday to me. It all seemed pretty weird, considering it's not really my birthday. It's the thought that counts though, I guess.

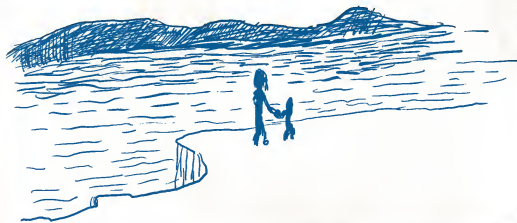
Simon was nice to me, but I could tell something was wrong.

DAY AFTER MY BIRTHDAY

Simon's been wearing the crown too much. He yells out the windows when there's nobody there. I try to stop him, but he doesn't seem to even know I'm there.

Today when he was yelling at nobody and walking in circles I gave him a banana he gave me last week that I saved for a special occasion. He took it and started eating it, and that made him stop yelling. I hugged him and he looked down at me. It was as if he noticed me for the first time. He didn't even know I was there! His looked at me and his eyes suddenly were shiny. He hugged me and said over and over I'm sorry I'm sorry Marcy! I'm so sorry!

Simon said he had seen all kinds of crazy visions and was remembering things that didn't happen. He says he saw a vision of me and my mom. I asked him to draw what he had seen, and he gave me this:



I think he just made it up, but who knows?

DAYS AND DAYS AFTER MY BIRTHDAY

I'm lonely.

See that?

Those are actual tears I CRIED while I was drawing.

AS IN SOBBING!

That's how bad things are!!! What do you expect??

Since I learned to read, I must've read that letter, like, five hundred times. The one Simon found in my pocket when he found me. I cry every time I read it, so now I only read it once in a while. Simon thinks it was from my mother and said she must have been in trouble when she wrote it. She sounded so desperate, trying to find someone to help me.

I wish I could remember her and my dad. But especially her, because she was there with me. She put the letter in my pocket. Every day I wonder what happened to her. And I wonder why my father wasn't around. Someday I'm going to find out. I don't even know if he's alive.

Simon said we have to go NOW. He said the crown is telling him that something bad is coming, that we have to get to the mountains. He said we have to pack everything and leave the city NOW NOW NOW NOW

I'm sorry I'll write again when I can! He's crazy!

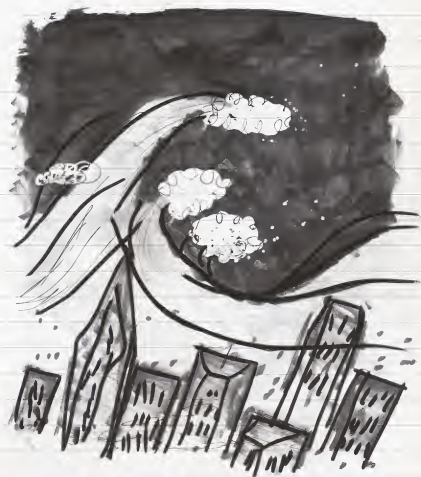


I'm sorry so much time has passed.
We made it through the Great Tidal Wave.

If we had stayed in the city we'd be dead. Simon was acting so crazy, I thought he was making it all up. But he made us climb higher and higher into the mountains. When I got tired and couldn't walk any more, Simon carried me until we found a cave in the mountain. He said we'd be safe up here.

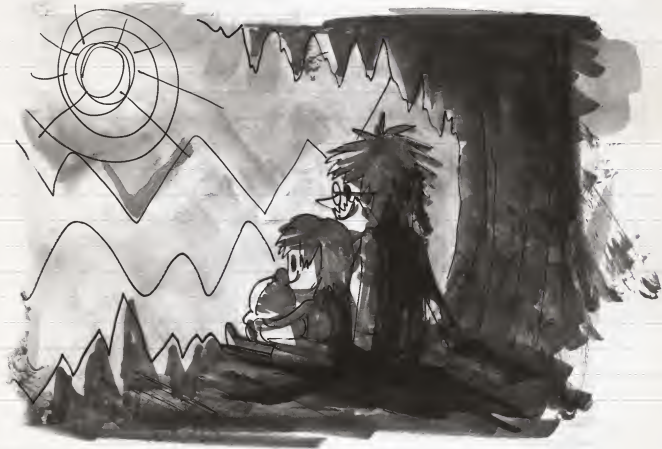
That first rush
of the water
scared me
half to death,
but it was
also exciting.
The wave washed
over everything.

When the water rose,
we climbed higher,
moving from cave
to cave, finding bigger
and better ones.



It sounds weird, but those were the best times we had together. For a short time things felt stable. You'd be surprised how much a secluded cave could feel like a home. Neither of us even cared to write almost that whole year.

We couldn't do anything but let nature run its course. We went with the flow. The flow took us someplace better. We didn't have to hide from oozerers. And he didn't need to wear that horrible crown. We didn't have to search for food, thanks to the fruit trees along that jungle mountaintop. Fruits I had never tasted before in my life. A sweetness so strong. Here in our oasis (that's what Simon called it) we didn't have to care that the world was destroyed, because here it wasn't. All we had to do was wait out the flood and live. Those were the good ol' days.



More and more I appreciate what Simon did for me. I didn't realize it before. I have to give him props for teaching me how to write. I can write stuff down now so I won't forget it. I wish I'd always known how. Writing here seems to help me fit the pieces of my life together.

WHAT AM I???

If Simon says I'm half human, half something else, what was I? Simon had a guess but still hasn't told me. On account that it might hurt my feelings to say the word he wouldn't say. Whatever word it was! I just wish I knew where I came from. I want to know what to call myself. Whatever it is, the thing that makes me different, it kept me alive. If I'm alive, there is a good chance that my family could be, too.



So I've been prying. Only of course when he is coherent enough to even know what I'm talking about. It's as if Simon completely loses Simon for days. I think he gets possessed by that crown. It's like he becomes somebody else. He used to come back right away, but each time it takes him longer to become Simon again.

Simon's science talks were always like magic. He said that he and I are special. He said we were some of the last people left, but that we'd find the others someday and we'd all have a big party.

Simon also told me we'd be meeting all kinds of new animals and people, because their DNA changed and made them different.

When Simon starts ranting and acting weird, sometimes he tells me about the creature with its head on fire. He says there were plenty of other people living in different realms. I don't know what in the world he is even talking about.



For now, it's just me and Simon and the fireflies. All those little lights in the wind. From up in the mountains at night, you can see the fireflies move through the wreckage of the cities below. It's so quiet and beautiful. It's magic.

PACKING DAY

Simon told me he has to leave. He said his mind is too damaged. He's afraid he'll hurt me. He said I'm too young to leave on my own, so he's making an arrangement to make sure I'm Okay. I'm scared. I don't know what he means. He said he'll tell me everything, but he keeps packing his dogsled.

He's really starting to scare me. I don't know how I can help him.
I don't think he's helpable.

He's been leaving at odd hours and coming back carrying all kinds of weird items. The latest is a winter parka and a dog sled. Sometimes I don't think he even recognizes me. Sometimes he calls me Gunther. Other times it's "Gun-ter!"

"I must move North, Gunther!
Where are my Socks, Gunter?!"

Where did he even come up with that?

I'm so scared that colder weather will only make him worse. Simon keeps his video stuff in his duffel bag, but he won't let me touch it. I stayed outside packing his sled while he recorded another one of his videos. I could tell he was crying and slipping in and out of his old self. Sounding scientific one minute and then screaming nonsense the next. Everything he owns and has acquired over the years was packed in his sled. He was leaving, but I don't know where. He just says "North."

I stuffed a few photos of us into his parka pocket before it was time for him to go. I hope one day he will come to his senses. It kills me to see his mind vanishing like this.

The crown is taking him away for good.

You're my old friend
I don't want you to go.
Is this really the end?
Please tell me no.

You said your mind
Was getting warped and hazy.
Before I was blind
to all of your crazy.

I still love the old you.
I want you to know
There's too much
we've been through.
Do you have to go?

I hope you find peace
and I hope you calm down.
Please, Simon, don't
lose yourself to the crown.



I'm crying as I write this. I don't want to write about how he left.
I miss him so much already. Simon is the only reason I'm alive. He was the
smartest person I have ever met. He protected me and was willing to
lay down his life for me. I don't think I'll ever see him again. Ever.

I went to my bed and I cried into my pillow. I thought my heart would break.
While I was crying, I felt something under my pillow.

There was a sealed envelope on my bed addressed to me.

MY DEAREST MARCY,

IF YOU ARE READING THIS, OUR TIME TOGETHER HAS COME TO AN END.

I AM SO SORRY YOU HAD TO WATCH MY SOUL SLIP AWAY. I CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW HARD IT HAS BEEN TO DEAL WITH THE DANGEROUS, INSANE PERSON I HAVE BECOME. BUT I'M HOPING THIS LETTER WILL REDEEM ME IN SOME WAY.

I'M ^{AND WORSE AND WORSE} GETTING WORSE AND THERE IS NO EASY WAY TO SAY THIS, SO HERE GOES: I MEAN HERE IS WHAT I LEARNED

I HAVE DISCOVERED SOMETHING CRAZY. NOT CRAZY LIKE THE CRAZY THAT COMES FROM THE CRAZY PART OF ME, EVEN THOUGH IT SOUNDS CRAZIER THAN ANYTHING THAT I EVER SAID TO YOU.

ALL I KNOW IS THAT WHOEVER WROTE THAT NOTE IN YOUR POCKET EXPECTED ME TO ~~HELP ME HELP~~ HELP YOU. BITTERSWEET MEMORIES OVERWHELMED ME AS I REALIZED HOW I COULD ACCOMPLISH THIS. BETTY AND I WROTE A BOOK. WE WROTE A BOOK TOGETHER I MEAN. WE WROTE A BOOK TOGETHER BETTY AND I ABOUT OCCULT MAGIC AND ALCHEMY AND THEIR RELATION TO SCIENCE AND PHYSICS. IT'S CALLED "MYSTIC ~~RITUALS~~ RITUALS AND THEIR SPACE-TIME APPLICATIONS". I'VE KEPT IT WITH ME BUT FOR THE LONGEST TIME I COULDN'T BEAR TO OPEN IT BECAUSE OF THOUGHTS OF MY DARLING BETTY. SHE WAS FOREVER LOST TO ME. BETTY WAS LOST. TO ME

BUT NOW I NOT ONLY HAD TO OPEN IT, BUT STUDY IT,
OR I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO HELP YOU, MARCY.

AFTER COMBING THROUGH ALL THE RITUALS AND HUNDREDS^(100s)
OF SUPERNATURAL BEINGS BETTY AND I HAD RECORDED, I NOW
BELIEVE THAT YOUR DAD IS SOME SORT OF UNDEAD KING.
OR DEMON LORD KNOWN AS THE "NAMELESS ONE" IN A
PARALLEL~~2~~ DIMENSION KNOWN AS THE "~~NIGHTOSPHERE~~"
"NIGHTOSPHERE"

UNFORTUNATELY, I HAVE NO ANSWERS AS TO WHERE HE HAS BEEN
AND HOW YOU GOT INTO OUR WORLD. I ~~AM~~ ALSO AFRAID
I HAVE NO INFORMATION REGARDING HIS INTENTIONS.

BETTY AND I HAD DOCUMENTED THE RITUALS VARIOUS CULTS
USED TO OPEN TO OPEN A PORTAL BETWEEN REALMS AND SUMMON
SUPERNATURAL ENTITIES TO EARTH.

IT WAS ALL THERE IN THE BOOK, AND EVEN THOUGH I WAS LOSING MY
MIND, I DID IT, MARCELINE! I COMPLETED THE RITUAL!
THE PORTAL ACTUALLY OPENED! A RIP BETWEEN DIMENSIONS
APPEARED. I SAW HUNSON AND HE SAW ME. EACH OF US
WATCHING THE OTHER THROUGH A WEIRD RIP IN THE BARRIER
THAT SEPARATES OUR TWO WORLDS.

AFTER I COMPLETED THE BINDING SPELL ON YOUR DAD
THE PORTAL CLOSED AND EVERYTHING WENT DARK.
GOD KNOWS WHAT I DID. ALL I KNOW IS THAT I LEFT YOU ON MY
SLED, HEADED NORTH, WHERE I WILL ESTABLISH MY
KINGDOM, AS IN ANCIENT TIMES GUNTHER

NO NO NO NO NO NO NO.

ALL I KNOW, MARCELINE IS THAT
YOU NOW HAVE THE POWER TO RECONNECT
WITH YOUR FATHER.

THE SPELL IS SIMPLE:

1. DRAW THIS MAGICAL SYMBOL



2. DOUSE THE DRAWING IN BUG MILK

3. ALL THAT'S LEFT TO DO
IS REPEAT THESE WORDS;

MALOSO
YOBISCUM
ETCUM
SPIRITUM

PLEASE DON'T RUSH. TAKE TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT.
MAKE SURE YOU DO WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU. I HOPE YOU
FIND THE TRUTH OF WHO YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU CAME
I HOPE YOU FIND WHAT YOU'RE SEARCHING ^{FROM}
FOR AND DREAMING ABOUT.

I HAVE ENCLOSED A FAREWELL PRESENT FOR YOU, GUNTHER.

REMEMBER THAT NOTE FROM YOUR MOM I FOUND
IN YOUR POCKET WHEN I FOUND YOU? WHEN YOU WERE
LITTLE WHEN I FOUND YOU, IN YOUR POCKET YOU HAD
A NOTE DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN I FOUND YOU?
I WAS WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME TO SHOW YOU
BUT IN MY MADNESS I FORGOT.

TWO PHOTOS.

THEY ARE A LEGACY FOR YOU, MARCY,
FROM THE PAST. I HOPE THESE BRING YOU
COMFORT NOW THAT I'M GONE, AND REMIND
YOU THAT YOU ARE LOVED.

REMEMBER TO DREAM BIG DREAMS, KID!
BEST OF LUCK, GUNTHER!

YOUR FRIEND

SIMON^{III}
(KING OF THE ICY KINGDOM TO THE NORTH!) 

It's my mom.
He left me
pictures
of my
mom.

They're so beautiful. I think I can remember how it felt, holding her hand while we looked out over the water.

When I look at the other one I miss her so bad it hurts. Is it weird to miss her that much, even though I can barely remember her? I'm so little in that photo. I want to feel her holding me in her arms and hugging me again like that. I keep looking at it. I wish I could see her face. But it's really her. I'll keep these with me forever.

Now that Simon's gone, everything has to change.

Reading Simon's letter over and over again as if it would suddenly change. Giving me this information has sparked a million questions. Does this mean I'm half Nightospherian whatever? None of this makes sense. I can't even remember my dad, and now I'm supposed to believe he's some sort of dangerous and powerful king? If he rules his own dimension why have I been stuck HERE ALONE?! If he's so powerful why doesn't he just come here and get me? Doesn't he know there's like no one left on the planet? I'm his daughter! Why is this . . . wait, why am I sitting here asking myself these questions? I should be asking my so-called father.

I'm gonna go get ALL of my answers from him. I've been way too long in the dark. It's time I knew what I was and where I came from. I'm ready to try the spell. Simon didn't sound TOO crazy when he wrote it down. But if he got something wrong or he's wrong about my dad, I don't think I should try it by myself. Who else is out there, though? I've never seen ONE other being except weird monsters, ever!

Stay tough. Stay Positive.

There must be somebody out there.

MORNING- A BREAKTHROUGH! There IS someone else!

I SMELLED SOMETHING!
I'M LIKE A DOG!

I'VE LEARNED TO
FOLLOW A SCENT!

My senses
are opening up!



Bingo.

I followed the scent I picked up to a secret camp deep in the woods.

I FOUND TWO LIVING BEINGS!

I've been cautiously stalking them for a week.

They have names. Remi and Rosella. Brother and sister.

Even more cool, they're **WEREWOLVES!!**

There was a full moon on the third night, and from my hiding place I watched them transform from regular-looking humans to total fangy wolf maniacs! Believe me I ducked and stayed hidden. I climbed a tree to sleep in and heard them howling all night.



The next morning I snuck up to their camp and eavesdropped on their conversation. I learned that they were able to survive due to their bloodline. They were also different. So I guess Simon's rants about people with different DNA being the survivors were true.

Today I befriended the brother and sister werewolves! (I never thought I'd ever write that sentence!) Remi tells me they were Tasmanian werewolves, also known as Thylacines. Their ancestors have roamed the forests for generations. He said they've been hunted for centuries but never exterminated because they always migrated at night and hid from sight. He told me werewolves can do magic when they gather in large groups.

Being travelers, their family members are scattered across different continents, but Remi says that the strong powers of wolf senses and intuition that go with their bloodline will always help them find one another when in need.

Wicked, huh? Huh? I was practically like a WOLF picking up their scent and tracking them down.

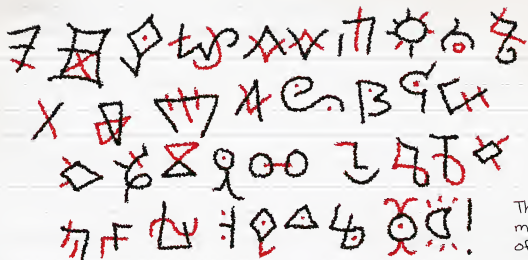
WOOOOO!

(That was actually my attempt at a wolf call.)

I'm lucky that they're werewolves, because they actually believe in all this weird stuff that I've found out about myself. AND they believe in demons and magic spells and curses and stuff! Looks to me like they're perfect candidates for my little demon summoning ritual.

Check it out!
They can both draw!
This is what
I look like now-
DRAWN BY
WEREWOLVES!!





They taught
me all kinds
of magic
symbols!

So we've been walking for days on end. I haven't brought up you-know-what yet! Rosella doesn't talk much, but Remi sure does. I still don't get how these two know where they are going. A lot of time equals a lot of talking. I've never opened up this much to anyone before, not even Simon!

But I was afraid to tell them about my dad. Afraid I'd scare them off and of what they'd think about me. But when they talked about their own dad also being a werewolf, and how the werewolf gene was passed down from generation to generation, I saw an opening and went for it. They didn't freak out at all and said they would help me! They said they'd actually heard about "The Nameless One" from their elders. Seriously, am I the only person who didn't know about this stuff? It sure is starting to feel that way. Anyway, Rosella said that summoning Hunson Abadeer to her werewolf clan would be a huge win for their street cred. That they have been warding off the evil of Nosferatu (or as Remi calls them, "The creatures of the night"). I'm not sure what she's talking about, but she seems to think helping me contact my Dad might all work out. This will be good, I can feel it.

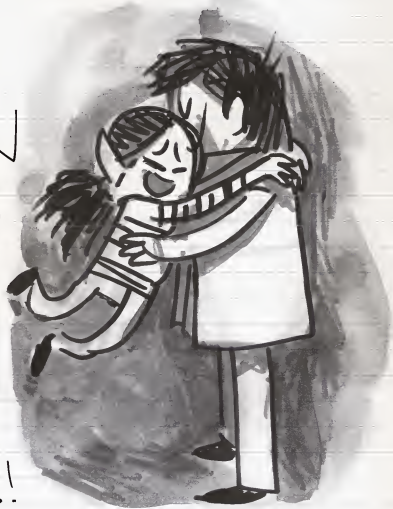
I need them, they need my dad. It's a total werewolf, interdimensional win-win. Plus I really like these two.

They're real characters, btw. If I didn't mention it before, Rosella keeps to herself, and Remi has kind of a lisp that makes him fun to listen to. From talking with him so much, I noticed I'm kind of a natural mimic. I subconsciously started imitating him when I answered him back. I caught myself lisping a little a bunch of times but quickly controlled myself. I hope he doesn't think I'm making fun of him. I can't blow this!

GUESS WHAT???

WE'RE
GONNA
SUMMON
MY DAD
!!!

IT'S REALLY
HAPPENING!
WISH ME LUCK!!



We will begin the chant at sundown.
I'm so nervous and excited!!!



Day Double Whatever

Well. That sure didn't go as planned. For reals.

We summoned him all right.

And he's HORRIBLE!

The Worst!!

The first people I come in contact with and the first thing he does after meeting me is he walks up to them and sucks the life out of them! Now my friends are just withered husks in the dirt! It was nothing to him! That's how my father says hello! My "dad" Hunson Abadeer couldn't have been more nonchalant, or more pompous. He brushed it off, sucking my friends' souls I mean, like I should have known that whomever I brought to the ritual was going to get their souls sucked.

He says he sucks souls just because he can AND to gain power.

Which he completely contradicted a minute later

by saying he was infinitely powerful!

WHICH IS IT, DAD?!!

This is like way too much information for me to take in right now.

He burst through the portal, devoured my friends, then wrapped his arms around me like we're supposed to be cool. Tossed out a wink and a "HEY BABY!" As if we hadn't been separated 99.9999 percent of my life thus far. I always pictured my dad to be a great guy and by the way Rosella and Remi talked about him, he truly was a great guy in their eyes. But now my friends' eyes are lifeless foggy holes in their hollow, brain-dead bodies. This SUCKS!



As astonishing as his actions were, I couldn't help but wonder if this kind of outrageous behavior was the norm for him. Simon did say my Dad came from a completely different world. Even though I hate him for sucking the life from my friends, I need to humor him because, let's face it, who knows what he could do? I can't let him know I don't like him. I can't write him off too quickly.

Besides, he's the only one with the answers. There is still so much I don't know about myself and where I come from. If I want to find out, I'm going to have to ask him. He told me to take the night and process our meeting and we'll regroup in the morning. Like I'd get any sleep after a night like that with my friends' bodies lying there! I haven't slept a wink, and it's almost sunrise now.

My dad reappeared in the morning in a sheath of fire. He said because of the "help" from my "buds" he had a great night's sleep and was feeling great about himself. He hugged me as a greeting and was exuding a terrible-smelling smoke. I could barely breathe. Not a great start to our second meeting. Neither of us spoke much until we got to the water, although he kinda hums under his breath a lot. Maybe that's why I like music so much. Maybe I get that from him.

He led me down a long, abandoned pier and looked out at what was now a sea of refuse and sewage. A weird feeling overcame me, as if I had been there before. He started answering the question I was about to ask as if he knew it was coming. He started saying things like: "Look kid, I want you to know I didn't abandon you. You have no idea how hard it was to let you go." I felt paralyzed. I wanted to speak, but something was stopping me. All I could do was listen. "Times were tough—even you know that. Your world was ending, and my world devolves into lawlessness when I'm not there."

He basically blamed everything on the fact that the Nightsphere was no place for a baby. Maybe he WAS trying to protect me. I'm still not completely sure. He's a little tricky. But I learned a lot when our conversation, or his rather, took a turn, and he then went on and on about all the good and evil things he's accomplished. From the chaos of his homeland to his trips abroad soul-sucking to his humanitarian work in the Nightsphere. He started to sound like he was running for mayor or something. It all sounded so rehearsed. But you know what? Part of me bought it. He did make a couple of self-deprecating jokes that showed me he wasn't just a jerk who just killed all my friends.

Bottom line. This is my one and only chance to get in touch with my demon roots. If I don't freak out, and he acts a little nicer, I think we might have a shot at an actual father-daughter relationship.

But we'll see.

Day 2 of "Hanging with Dad"

Well, I'm conflicted about him all right. I want to hate him, but he really talks to me like he cares most of the time. So a part of me can't help loving him. I mean, he is my dad. Is that bad? He always has food somehow and is undeniably charming and sometimes funny. I have to stop thinking about what he did to Remi and Rosella. Even though I'll never get over it, it's somewhat understandable, if I think of my dad as some kind of sophisticated Feral animal. He says that nature is a balance. There's always a price. For every give there's a take and for every success, a sacrifice. He needed Remi and Rosella so that he could be with me.

Of course, I'll never get over what he did. It was too weird and shocking. But at least I'm starting to understand him and where he's coming from.

I will try to bring up to him that maybe he could help out the rest of their werewolf family. It's the least we could do.

Later, though. I'm more eager to ask about Mom. Wish me luck.





ABOUT MY MOM

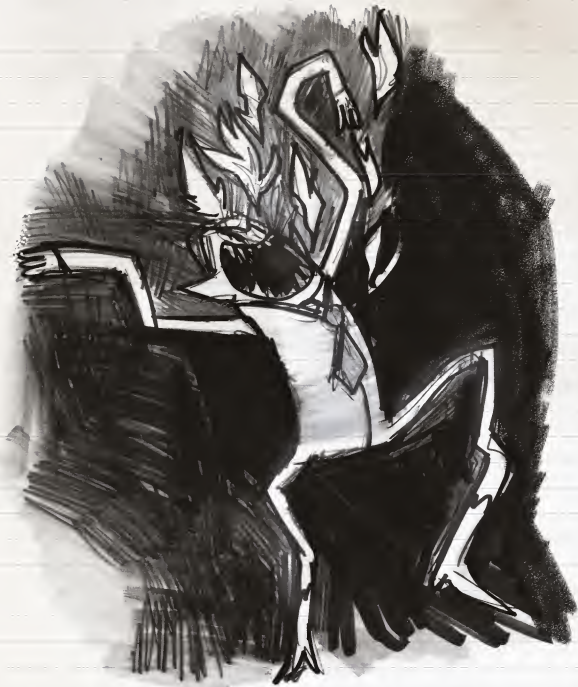
He has a lot to say about her, but every time he starts to answer a question, he thinks of something else. I think he's got a short attention span, maybe as a result of being a ruler and having to keep track of a lot of stuff at the same time. He mainly talks about how beautiful my mom was, then goes on and on about the Nightsphere.

The stuff he did say about my mom, I don't really feel like I can write any of it down on paper. I want to be able to have my own thoughts and feelings about her and where I come from, but I don't.

All I have is the truth through his eyes. Don't get me wrong, he made her sound beautiful and sweet and wonderful, and I do believe, deep down, that she was nothing less than that. It just feels as if I would be doing her an injustice by retelling somebody else's version of her life. It's a lot, and I'm just starting to process it all.

DAD'S POWERS

This afternoon, Dad put on a little "educational show" of all his bizarre abilities and powers. I'm gonna try drawing them to the best of my ability, but some of them were just too weird to grasp and even know what was happening. But I'll do my best.



Never in a million years could I imagine
my dad would be THIS CRAZY.

He told me he's taking me someplace really special today.

Something about the world's best corn dog?

I don't even know what that is.

Day Whaters squared

Wow, what a day!

My dad took me to an old abandoned carnival at the edge of the city. At first I thought it was going to be extremely lame. How could a place that's supposed to be filled with amused people ever be fun when it's completely empty? I was wrong!

I'll admit— it was pretty depressing at first. Let's just say skeleton clowns whose makeup somehow stayed on and didn't decompose with the body is probably the creepiest thing I've ever seen. Dad threw a huge temper tantrum once he realized that living, breathing human beings had to actually be around to make his beloved "corn dogs," but, in the scheme of things, it was a tiny hiccup in our adventure. We truly had a blast together. Most of the rides were still operable. The one upside to everyone being dead is that there were no lines!

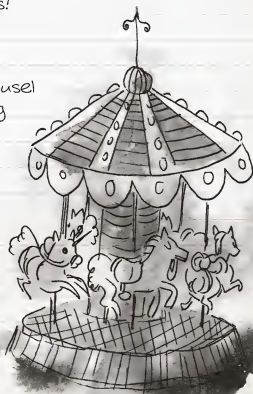


We rode the carousel
three times, howling
with laughter.

The cotton
candy machine
still worked!
Except for
the dirt!



Then we rode
the Tilt-a-Whirl
until I puked!
It was worth it!





The best part of the day, at least for me, was riding the Ferris wheel. It circled around twice, then the motor clanked, and it stopped completely just as we reached the top! I was freaking out a little bit.

We were stuck at the top and no one was around to fix it. "Calm down, Marceline," he said. "Look at the wicked beautiful view

from up here—there's nothing to worry about." I looked out at the vista, and he

was right. Even with all the devastation, it was beautiful, and there was absolutely nothing to worry about. I felt as if we were on top of the world. The setting sun in the sky colored the ruined world. Nothing could get at us up there. The carnival was our weird, broken-down kingdom, and Dad and I had each other. That's all we needed.

The wind changed. Suddenly there were clouds overhead, and I felt the first tiny drops of rain. The drizzle became a downpour, and then a thunder-and-lightning storm! Dad immediately put his coat over me and whipped out an umbrella. The storm tapping on the umbrella reminded me of Simon. And even though I was happy for the first time, feeling like I had a Dad who cared about me, I teared up thinking about poor

Simon, driving crazily into the tundra on his dogsled, going nowhere. Simon did everything he could for me. He didn't deserve what happened

to him. For a moment up there I felt like the storm was Simon there with us. Telling me he was happy I found my father. I felt maybe it was his way of letting me go.

Dad made that weird cackle of his, did some kind of magical swoosh, and carried me down the rusty side of the Ferris wheel in his arms in the rain and thunder and lightning. On the way down something big, red, and metal with a long handle fell out of his jacket. It clinked and clunked until it hit the bottom. When we got to the ground, I picked it up.

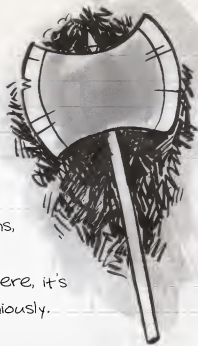
It was an **AXE**. We walked under a shredded tarp to get out of the rain.

"Why are you carrying an axe in your pocket?"

He brushed it off. "Oh, this old thing? This is the Family axe, kid. An ancient, evil heirloom.

The Abadeer Axe."

I was afraid it had something to do with executions, so I wasn't even going to ask. I didn't want to go down that road. "I guess you're old enough now. Here, it's yours." He handed it over to me, sort of ceremoniously.



When I touched it, a strange feeling coursed through my veins, like a jolt of energy. This axe had some serious juju about it. Good or bad, I didn't really care. It's a gift from my Dad, and I will cherish it forever. Funny how your feelings can change so completely.

Day 6 with Dad

Things couldn't be better between us. I knew if there was ever a time to ask him to help with the remaining members of the werewolf family, it was now. He said he wants to help! He said, "Piece of cake!" I told him all about them and the tribe of beings they were afraid of. He laughed in my face at the word "Nosferatu." He told me I must not understand what Lord of Evil means.

He pretty much said that he is the most powerful force to be reckoned with, apparently. He said that no monsters, no demons, and certainly no middle-of-the-road vampires would stand a chance against him. I didn't connect the dots on that one. The werewolves were afraid of vampires? I didn't know werewolves existed, never mind vampires.

We should get to the werewolf camp in no time. Dad says that, like me, he can track down werewolves by their scent. He really is like a feral beast sometimes. (No offense, Dad. But it's true.)

He said we should be there by tomorrow night. Pretty cool.

Day 7 with Dad

How could I be that dumb? After everything my dad has told me about his "pure evilness," and after what he did to Remi and Rosella, how could I think he would actually help the werewolf family? I'm gonna have to do something about him, but I don't know what or how.

I can't believe it. We arrived at a truck stop on Route 90. We watched them from above on top of the freeway overpass. Dad insisted we stay unseen and "scope things out" before we waltzed into the camp. Seemed legitimate, considering what they were doing. Thirty or forty of them stood in a circle around a bonfire chanting in Latin or something. I couldn't help but think maybe they were trying to locate their lost brethren, Remi and Rosella. That was probably just my guilty conscience talking, though.

I explained to Dad that the travelers felt that they were under an immense threat. Remi and Rosella had said that their people were being targeted. They said regular humans were probably all dead by now, and so that left the werewolves as the closest thing to the vampire's favorite food source.

"Makes sense," Dad said. "Even half-human souls make the blood taste different than animal blood. It's the next best thing for those bloodsucking vampires."

Eww. I should have known then and there that something wasn't quite right. But my judgment was clouded. I wanted nothing more than for Dad to be that guy who would help me by helping them. Now that I think about it, he may have even been licking his lips as he said that gross stuff. I think I blocked that part out.

We stood up there on the overpass for a few more moments. I was blabbering out some type of game plan of how to make our first impression on meeting the werewolves. Then as we were walking toward them all around their campfire, I got the same feeling I got right before he attacked Remi and Rosella. It was an intense feeling. Then he turned to me and whispered, kinda cocky, "Watch this, buddy."

He pulled out his amulet, put it around his neck, and magically transformed. Now he had a gigantic mouth full of weird teeth. He walked up to each of the werewolf family members, and one by one ghostly blobs flew out of their bodies and down the throat of his revolting demon face. Within a minute their bodies had all dropped to the ground like empty corn husks. Like thirty of them! Shocked, I couldn't say a word.

He quickly returned to his less vile state, but at that moment, my dad, Hunson Abadeer, looked to me like the WORST thing I'd EVER SEEN.





Day 8 with Dad (going downhill fast)

This whole playing-it-cool thing would be impossible if my Father wasn't such a dimwitted schmuck. It's been a few days since his roadside werewolf sacrifice, and he's becoming more and more delusional as time passes. Can you believe he thinks he helped those people? He claims I asked him to save the werewolves from the vampires, and that's exactly what he did. He says that by wiping them all out at once, he stopped any future threats against their kind. He said the vampires would have killed them, and I should be thanking him for only sucking their souls! YEAH, RIGHT. Thanks, Dad. I guess you didn't kill Rose and Rem. I guess their souls were finally reunited with their family in your stupid gross soul sack!

On a brighter note, even though it might be coldhearted of me to say, the werewolves DID have some useful stuff in their encampment. And there's a gas station with tons of processed, packaged food still in perfect condition. BATHROOMS with real T.P. and a truck-stop shower!



Oh, how I've missed you, soap!
I love you, soap!

The truck stop has a diner attached to it, too.

That's where I'm hanging out now. The windows are shot out, but it's nice in here. The booths are comfy. Most of the werewolves were living out of vans and trucks, but there was this one cool, metal, streamlined trailer that caught my eye. It was filled with candles, jars full of who knows what, and these huge books that looked hundreds of years old.

When my dad knocked on the door, I didn't want him to see what was inside, so I left quickly. Now I'm just hanging here in the diner. If the appliances still work, maybe I'll get my hands a little greasy stirring up some hot food. It's been so long since I've had good, homemade, hot food.

Day 9 with Dad

IT'S OVER



THAT IS THE FINAL STRAW.

GO AHEAD. Steal souls. Steal as many
as you want. But steal my FRIES?!?!

Who does that?!

I was TRYING to be cool. I thought I could make the best of an awful
situation. I thought the worst was over. But then he stole FROM ME.

HIS OWN DAUGHTER.

That is a whole new lowest of the low!

MY

HOT FOOD! Their freezer had just one big handful left
of the best frozen fries ever, and I deep-fried them to
GOLDEN PERFECTION. Nice and crispy the way I LOVE 'em!

I only stepped outside because I stupidly left this notebook on the curb
as it started to rain. So I let my fries sit unattended for seriously like
thirty seconds.

By the time I was back my Dad was stuffing his face with

MY

French fries that I had made for

MYSELF

You do **NOT** mess with a girl's Food!

That gluttonous jerk didn't even bother following me out when I left
crying. He just munched away. It all came back to me how he had killed
my friends, then their entire family.
I'm in the RV now. I know these werewolves gotta have something I can
use against him. I just have to find it.

DAY 1 WITHOUT DAD

YES!

sigh I did it. He's Gone.

Easier than expected. For never having a permanent home, the travelers sure were organized. I found what I needed in the index of the first old book I picked up. It was the same portal spell Simon had used to summon the "Nameless One." I personally like that title better. I'm still too riled to call him Dad right now. The portal ritual works both ways, I guess.

As far as the steps go, I found the jar labeled POWDERED BUG MILK—JUST ADD WATER. I drew the Rynda Mandala and lured him outside.

I threw the milk on the mandala, and
WHOOSH! GONE!

BYE crazy demon Dad.



Love you.

And.

GOOD.

Riddance.

DAY 4 WITHOUT DAD

Lonely again. Loneliness is the worst, Diary! I know now that I took for granted my time with Simon. He was so good to me. Why did he have to go completely nuts? Now I have two "fathers" who are crazy! Not to mention no friends, no mother, no purpose, just me.

At least I'm learning and really getting to know myself. Unfortunately, I'm not sure I'm really all that interesting.

Daddy, why did you eat my fries?

I bought them, and they were mine.

But you ate them,

Yeah, you ate my fries.

And I cried, but you didn't see me cry.

Daddy, do you even love me?

Well, I wish you'd show it,

Cause I wouldn't know it.

What kind of dad eats his daughter's fries

And doesn't even look her in the eyes?

Daddy, there were tears there.

If you saw them, would you even care?





My only friend now is Hambo, but, of course, he can't talk back to me. I drew this because I was bored and wanted to see if I could do a decent sketch of him as if he was a guy and we were out on a date.

This is really ultra lame. But I don't care. Who's gonna see it except me and you, Diary? I can be as dumb as I want.

It feels like you're the only one listening, BECAUSE YOU ARE. I still hope for a living friend. Somebody I can trust and hang with. It's so crazy and dangerous out there, but I can handle it. Turns out, I'm pretty tough anyhow. The oozers don't mess with me anymore for some reason. It's almost eerie how they seem repulsed now whenever I stare at them and concentrate, thinking "GO AWAY!" Maybe my newfound demon side won't be so bad after all. Is it possible that just being around Hunson made me more in tune with it?

All I know for sure is that I'll need to find some more food soon.

There were only so many bags of chips I could fit in my backpack. I knew it wouldn't feel right staying here at the truck stop for very long.

Time to scout out a new crib. A place that doesn't remind me of all that bad stuff that happened with my father.

MALL DAY 1

SCOUTING MISSION SUCCESSFUL!

As I wandered around, lost, with no sense of direction, I remembered something Simon told me years ago BEFORE he went nuts. He said if we ever got separated I should go to the old, abandoned mall.

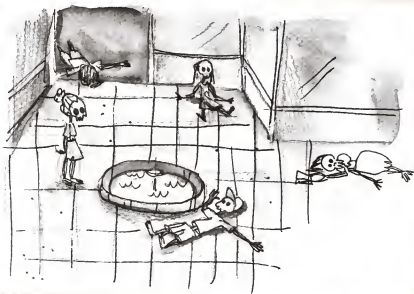
When this whole worldwide war started, I guess some of the survivors set up the mall as a makeshift refugee camp, a sort of biosphere. Simon took me there a few times when he first found me. The whole thing was underground. I mean it sank underground! Where else to hide out and maybe find some cool clothes? Anything would be better than these rags I found in the vintage clothing store.

When I got here, part of me was hoping Simon might be living down here, waiting for me to come, wanting to see me again. Maybe he wasn't crazy anymore?

But I should have known better than to think he could reverse all that terrible damage the crown did to his brain. Nothing was going to stop him from going north. I knew he wouldn't be here, but for, like, half an hour, I yelled his name. The place has a nice echo.

When I look down at the empty mall from the balcony, I feel like I'm headlining an arena concert no one bought tickets to.

The whole place is kind of spooky, because it's so huge, empty, silent. But, hey, maybe I could use some quiet for a change.



I think I'm glad Simon wasn't here. He's just too crazy now, and I wouldn't know how to deal with him. When we parted, he barely knew who I was and was calling me Gunther.

Also, nothing he told me about my past in his letter matches up with what little my dad told me. Either one of them was lying or wrong or they both were. I didn't know why I was left behind, what happened to my mom. I don't get it.

The problem is, maybe I never will.

When I think about the last big talk I had with Simon, I realize it was probably the most important one of my life.

He took my hand and said his mind was getting worse. He said he felt like a bird that needed to migrate North, and that I needed to be ready in case I had to go on without him. He said he worried what might happen if he really lost it.

Then he said the important thing, that "demon" is just a word made up by people who are scared. Everyone has good and bad in them and that I should never be afraid.

I thought he was talking about himself and his own shaky mental state. But now I think he was trying to tell me that I'm a demon. Simon wanted me to be OK with who I was.

I owe him for saving my life and teaching me pretty much everything I know. I miss him so much, the poor, crazy guy. I miss him so much. And I'll always love him.



Mall Day 3

I Found another Polaroid camera in one of the stores—the first one I've found in years that actually works! It's way better than Simon's, and there's, like, tons of film. Here's what the place looks like:



I always dreamt about what it would be like to go shopping with my mom at the mall. I wished I could see all the people un-skeletonized, pretty and alive, and all the fashion and the beauty.

Mall Day 4

Nighttime. This place is a wreck now, but a beautiful wreck. This is gonna be HOME For a while. I remember Simon used to take me to Book World down here to Find good literature so he could teach me how to read and write. I was always more interested in the pet shop next door.

I should have been looking For something to eat these last couple of days. I'm starving. All I've been doing is remembering walking through the stores thinking about crazy Simon bringing me here as a kid.

YAAAYY!!
BOOK
WORLD!



Book World is kinda the same as I remember it. Except For the skeletons and broken glass and wreckage everywhere and tons of books all over the floor.

Mall Day 5

I get it now, why Simon taught me to read. At the time I was so annoyed with having to do postapocalyptic schooling. Hello, shouldn't we be looking for shelter or something? But reading and writing are all I have now. Who knows? Maybe I'll become a famous author one day.

Tiptoeing over piles of books, I spotted Little Women. I remember loving it when Simon asked me to read it to him.

The cover sucks, though.

I've been reading it all night. Man, I would do anything to have sisters or any sort of human relationship, for that matter. For now it's just me, my memories of Simon, my jerk Dad, and my books.



There's something else here, though. A weird vibe. I feel as if I'm NOT ALONE.

Mall Day 6

So, you know that weird vibe I was feeling? I think I solved the mystery. I think it MIGHT HAVE BEEN because there was A TINY LITTLE DOG spying on me from behind a knocked-over bookcase!

NOT

A SKELETON
BUT A
REAL
LIVE
DOG
!!!
...



I thought I was seeing things! But he kept peeking out. He was real! An actual DOG! How could he have survived???

He's sort of rust-colored. Maybe some of it's dirt? I think he saw how alone and messed up I was. He must have been able to relate. He did a funny, dog-type move that seemed to be asking me to follow him. Every time I took a step toward him, he moved away. Little by little he led me next door to the pet shop!

As far as food goes, he had plenty. He had survived all these years off the left-behind doggie treats and cat food. He must have had some of that tough DNA, too. He's like me and Simon. We're alive because we're lucky, not because we're better.

Then, the cutest thing happened. This dog was way smart and looked like he was lonely, too. He must've liked my style, cuz he nudged a doggie treat across the floor toward me, while he ate one and looked at me, kind of an offering of friendship.

Boy, was I hungry, but that was the last thing I wanted to eat. But I wanted to connect with him, so I Verry Slowwwwwly reached for the treat and took a bite. Not half bad. Tasted like peanut butter and bacon.

He wagged his tail! That did the trick! He actually came over to me! I patted him, and he started nuzzling up to me like crazy, his tail going wild, like I was his long-lost friend. And I guess I was. I felt the same way about him and gave him a huge hug. He is just so little and sweet and adorable.



FRIENDS!!

We played all day in the mall and had a blast. I found a ball and bounced it down the broken escalators, and he chased it, knocking over skeletons left and right. He caught it in his mouth and ran all the way back up to me so I could throw it again.

At night we ate some cat food together, curled up in a doggie bed, and snuggled, doggie and half-demon.

Oh, yeah, I named him

SCHWABL

after my favorite deli in the mall.

I LOVE HIM!



DREAM SEQUENCE

What are dreams?
What does it mean?
When I go to that place.
Traveling to galaxies
Flying through time
and space.

When I awake,
I can't relate.
Where did I just go?
Was that real,
Or was that fake?
Feels as if
I'll never know.

When I dream
It doesn't seem
Like I'm so alone.
I see their faces
And all those places.
Suddenly I'm home.

NIGHTTIME

It's colder than I've ever felt in the mall at night. I grabbed Schwabl and snuggled with him under the blankets on the big doggie pillow. I hoped this cold isn't Simon's doing, with his stupid powers. Before I left him, he could make the entire skyline around us start snowing. Briefly, but unlike anything nature could do on its own. This winter is coming in hard. Even though it's been freezing, my body's been going through some changes, to say the least. Part of that is feeling hot all the time. This usually only happens at night when I'm sleeping.

I dreamt I was in the Nightsphere.

The flames and screams and chaos. It felt all too real. I saw my parents, too. For the first time I got a closer look at my mom in the dream, even though I guess I was making it all up in my head. But then again, I know I must have looked at her all the time when I was a baby, so maybe my vision of her in my mind was really what she looked like. Maybe it was really my memory of her.

She was beautiful, and Hunson was . . . well, Hunson. He wanted me to join him on his evil reign of terror. In my dream I kinda wanted to. It reminded me of how Simon said he wanted things that he really didn't. It felt like someone else in my head was telling me to do it.

In the dream, I was thinking about joining my dad but I guess I took too long to decide because he transformed into a monster. He slowly drifted off into the flames and smoke, and then I was awake.

All my thoughts have been pretty loopy lately. Yet somehow, I feel like the dreams are trying to tell me something. Should I have hung with my dad more, even after what happened, and given him the benefit of the doubt? I mean, he's evil, but is a feral animal evil?

Or maybe I'm just going crazy. I don't know.



MALL MORNING WHATEVER

I was in bed snuggling with Schwabl, when I had a **MAJOR** breakthrough. A flood of memories came from some part of my mind where they'd been buried. I remember when I was a baby, all the funny faces my dad used to make to get me to stop crying. I have quick solid flashes of my mother and my dad hugging. They seemed so in love. I also had distinct memories of her talking in such a nice way about how strong he was. I remembered more of what I'd dreamt about before, traveling with my mom and dad on some kind of road trip. Maybe to that beach with the pier.

I tried to understand what all my dreams about them meant, why they were all coming out now. Not much else to do around here but analyze and wonder.

In my short time with "The Lord of Evil", there was one thing he told me that he emphasized. I forgot about it until now. He said things were going to be changing in a big way pretty soon. He said I needed to be ready for some big changes.

I don't know if this is what he meant, but I do occasionally feel quick, really weird pangs in my muscles and guts. I can tell something is up, but I don't know what. One weird thing—lately I imagine I can hear Schwabl talking to me. But that's just nuts, right?

Okay, no. NO. Schwabl is definitely not talking to me. His mouth would have to be moving for him to be talking, right? This is almost like a feeling. Like I'm reading his mind. Like I'm **SMELLING** his mind or something. Actually it must be a deep yearning to **KNOW** what he's feeling. No way am I hearing my dog talk to me!

ONE WEEK LATER!!!

I should be packing, but this is too unreal to not write down.

I found a freaking unicorn.

A UNICORN.



Well, now that I think about it, he looked more like a crazy, Uncle Simon version of a unicorn. I guess he just evolved from the various mutations from the war, like all the other weird creatures.

It happened because I've been sleepwalking. That's right. My dreams are no longer just dreams. I've started sleepwalking in the middle of the night. This was the third time this week! I think I sleepwalked about FIVE MILES, all the way to Daniel!

That's right. Daniel.
The. Unicorn. Guy.

How, you ask? Oh, I just sniffed out his soul in my sleep, then tried to kill him. No biggie! It actually was no biggie to him. Thankfully I woke up before I did anything super-weird to him in my sleep. When I woke up, I was so freaked out! I had no idea where I was, and some talking horse was trying to calm me down. I guess I have to accept that, in my dreams at least, I have the soul-sucking gene intact.

It was a total out-of-body experience, wanting to suck Daniel's soul (!), but then it was as if my humanity suddenly switched back on, and I stopped! Daniel was bizarrely understanding. His optimism was a breath of fresh air. I was having a near panic attack, thinking I was some sort of monster. He said he'd seen much worse. Which triggered my question of how he's so alive and well. His answer? Being vegan. I was all . . . "Uhhh, aren't you all? I mean don't horses just eat grass?" He says he eats special vegan grass. Whatever. I don't know why seeing weirdly evolved mythological creatures is still such a shock to me. I'm over here trying to steal his magic energy like it's the norm.



Daniel is just such a cool, down-to-earth dude. He thinks that since I'm half human, I can totally use my powers for good. I spent the rest of the night with him meditating and working on my breathing. It actually helped. He's going to be a crucial guy to have on my side. To remind myself that I'm not my dad and that I can stand for better things than sucking souls.

We're going to meet up tonight where I left him. I had to come back to the mall to get Schwabl and pack up our things. Daniel's horsey legs wouldn't have made it over the city rubble. I'm gonna miss this place, but Daniel's vibes are definitely rubbing off on me. I'm done hiding. We should all go face the world together. He has so much to teach me . . . And he plays the tambourine. Totally gonna start a band.



THOSE NO-GOOD, BLOODSUCKING
VAMPIRES!

WHY DID I LEAVE DANIEL ALL ALONE??

He was the most happy-go-lucky being I've ever met. AND WHAT DO THEY DO?!??
They bit his throat! Drained his blood and tossed his body aside for me to find!
We had so much fun talking about the things we would do. He told me we could
ride off into the sunset together.

WHYYYYYYY???

I WILL FIND WHO
DID THIS TO HIM
I'M GONNA GET
THEM ALL.

WOOOHH, BREATHE, MARCY.

You need to do this the right way. Before you go on a suicide mission,
you gotta regroup. Be smart about this.



Those MURDEROUS THINGS must still be close. After what they did to Daniel, they've had plenty to eat. They're strong right now. I need to go back home to the mall, get control of my own powers, and do my research. Book World has to have SOMETHING on vampires. Their abilities, weaknesses, anything. I WILL avenge my friend's death. Seeing his lifeless body gave me the same feeling I had when my dad stole all the werewolves' souls. They didn't deserve what happened, and neither did Daniel. The werewolves were terrified of these Nosferatus. Like an idiot, I thought my Father was going to help. Instead, I led him straight to them. It's all my fault. Daniel gave me the courage to believe that I can use my newfound powers for good.

Those vampires are going DOWN. This means war.

READING LIST

BOOKS

Teen Karate Butt-Kicking Manual
Hair Styles for the Practical Warrior

Your First Vampire Hunt
Staking Made Simple

Tae Kwon Don't: Fighting Styles to Avoid

MICROJITSU: Throws and Holds
For the Small of Stature

Don't Stick Your Neck Out:
Advanced Neck Protection

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO FIGHTING TWINS
The Joy of Head-Butting

Going Medieval on Monsters

Death Kicks for Preteens

BLOOD BATH: Bathtub-Based
Vampire Fight Techniques

MAGAZINES

Black Belt Goth Gazette

Kid Commando Quarterly

Girl Aggro Monthly

101 Lethal Kicks For Preteens

Punch-in-the-Nose Review

Gonzo Smackdown Weekly

MALL SHOPPING LIST

SWEEN'S (sleeping bags, camping stuff)

FASHION CHIMP (long underwear)

HOJO'S GLOVE & SLEEVE (mittens, scarves)

NEPTUNE'S CLOSET (boots)

FIND MORE ART SUPPLIES!

Mannequin Strike-points



(Best to worst)

Cat Food Flavors

1. Tidepod Surprise
2. Feline Feasties™
3. Meaty Mouse Reminders
4. Calico Cove™ Cat Chowder
5. Beef Mountain Gray Shooters
6. Dear Tabby™ White Meat Slurry
7. Apocalypse Meow Christmasberry Sliders

MINI TO-DO LIST

Write Mini-To-Do List

Sort stuff for Big Move

Pack dufflebag

Write EVERY day

Exercise EVERY day

Get Schwabl to pick ONE toy
to take along.

ANNOUNCEMENT: I'M LEAVING THIS JOINT!

You heard it here first, Diary. Schwabl and I have our sacks packed, our sleeping bag stuffed with snacks, stakes sharpened, and some nice warm jammies! We're ready! Time to hit the road!

Time to **KICK** some Vampire Butt!

But before we go, I gotta say good-bye to this place.

The mall changed me. I think for the better. When I came here, I was just a little kid, alone and scared. Now I've got mad skills. I finally feel ready to take on the harsh world out there. I'm sad to see this massive, once-flourishing structure crumble away. But there are a lot of reasons we can't stay here. First of all, I'm ready. I've spent months honing my abilities, working out, and mastering my Zen for Daniel.

Also, the more immediate reason is that little Schwabl isn't doing so well. It seems that the stronger I get, the weaker he becomes.

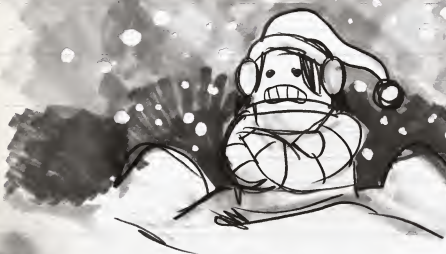
We both need to leave.

I've learned a lot here,
but I think it's time
to go. Good-bye, mall.

I'll miss you.



Welcome to my Post Mall Experience!!



it's freezinggg!!

I'm an idiot. why did I leave????

Day 3

What happened to Day 1+2? He and Maschwab are travelin' foocools! Heading for outskirts of town. Gotta get outta the city and up to the mountains. That's where the bloodsuckers first attacked.

A light snow falling, not too bad. But really cold at night. Good thing I scored my big fake-fur jacket Unicorn Daniel said real fur isn't cool.

I tied Hambro around Schwab! to keep him warmer and put knit caps of both of them. My travel Buddies look like a couple thugs! YEATH!!

Day 8

The snow has stopped. Climbing a mountain path, still no sign of shelter. No sign of vampires. BUT I CAN SMELL THEM.

Day 10

I see giant red mountains in the distance. Maybe, just maybe, there are survivors up there somewhere.

Day 13

I reached the top of the ridge and looked down into the valley. I couldn't believe my eyes. A flock of sheep roamed the meadow below. They looked so cute. Until I noticed one of the sheep was being dragged into the bushes by a shadowy figure.

I'd found my first vampire.

I didn't know if it was the vampire who got Daniel. I didn't care. I crept closer. Seeing this thing in the flesh was pretty intimidating. He was bigger than I imagined. I realized this wasn't going to be like fighting the mannequins at the mall. Vampires fight back. But all I could think of was Daniel.

I knew I could do it. How many Kung Fu books had I studied?



What a RUSH.

I was able to vanquish him, but that doesn't mean it went off without a hitch. I let my human emotions get the best of me. I probably should have gone the stealth route, but instead I made my presence known. I screamed "Leave that Sheep Alone!" while charging down the mountainside. He took off at lightning speed before I even got close. He moved so fast it was like he vanished.

I stood there in the middle of the flock, aggravated because I'd screwed it up. This was going to be harder than I anticipated.

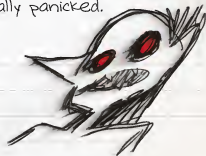
Then I heard a smug voice behind me. "Hello, Human." He had reappeared behind me the moment my back was turned. He was a real jerk, by the way.

"Finally, some worthwhile blood," he smirked, and grabbed me by the back of my arms, slamming me against a tree. "Silly. You really think you're a match for me?"

Little did he know that I was. Perhaps it was the adrenaline or my thirst for revenge, but I flung him around and threw him down, pinning him on the grass. He was strong, but I was way, way stronger. He stared at my eyes, and his expression changed. He actually panicked.

"Your eyes! They're red! Wha-wha-what are you?!"

I whispered in his ear, to freak him out:



"Silly. Take a gooooood whiff. Yeah, that's right. That's the smell of demon blood." He struggled and started to go all lame on me. "Please don't hurt me! I have a family. Kids! I have kids!" I loosened my grip as he pleaded, my eyes reverting to normal. "I only suck blood to survive! It's not my fault!" he whined.

I started to sympathize with him. What if he couldn't help himself, like the time I found myself almost sleep-soul-sucking? The moment he saw me hesitate, he threw me off and lunged straight for my neck! I quickly snapped myself out of it. I'd been an idiot! Vampires can't have freakin' kids! He was a monster with no remorse for what he did.

He looked at me with black, empty eyes. "You have no idea the battle you've started. When the King finds out about you, you're so dead."



I leaped on him with the loudest shriek I could muster and drove a stake deep into his heart. His body stiffened as he stared into my eyes, and then his entire body exploded and burst into a fiery ball of glitter.

I rolled back onto the grass and lay there in shock at what had just happened. A million thoughts were twirling around in my head. That was way too close for comfort. If I had learned anything from my father, it was to trust nobody. Especially not a vamp. I'd almost let my compassion turn me into that bloodsucker's dinner.

You gotta turn it off, Marceline. It's hard, because half of you is filled with love. But you gotta turn off your humanity toward these despicable creatures.

But there's still so much you need to learn about this species. So much more to understand. How can he move so fast, and why did he explode?

I will continue to hunt these blood fiends until they are no longer a threat to what little life remains on this planet. I will compile a log of all my research. From now on it's search and destroy. No hesitation.

Now it's on.
No mercy, Marcy.

Operation Vamp Hunt

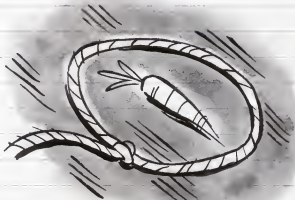
Day 1 — a bloody success

What a learning curve.

I've never been more proud and ashamed of anything I've done. Revenge is a primitive emotion. For sure, but, that said, wiping out a scourge of creepy, undead murderers can't be all bad. I spent too much time with my humanity shut off. It seemed necessary to protect us from the vamps. But now all I can do is question why I really did it.

But I'm worried. Schwabl is sick. He needs my help. Of all the powers I've absorbed, flight is the best, so being able to fly him around on my back is the least I can do. We cover so much ground by not having to walk anywhere.

The problem: There's very little food around. I need to catch us something to eat. I'm gonna set a trap, use some veggies as bait. Some critter will sniff it out, for sure. Hopefully one Schwabl and I can cook in a pot and gnaw on.



My trap worked . . . sort of. I was able to catch what I thought was a rabbit. The furry white ears were a dead giveaway, and I lassoed it up. Me and Schwabs were supposed to eat good tonight.

As I pulled my rope in, I was baffled by what I had caught.



A real-life little girl.
Or at least she seemed like one.
She was terrified when she saw me.
She looked at me the way I looked
at the oozers as a kid.
Do I really look that scary?

I dropped my tight grip on the rope, and this warm, fuzzy feeling overcame me. I can't describe how thrilled I was to see this girl. For so many years the idea of humans was merely a myth. The only survivors were people with outsider DNA, like myself or Simon or the werewolves. I stood there in awe and, without realizing it, I smiled. Humans had survived, too. The first smile I'd flashed in months. The girl was plenty relieved when I let her go. She almost smiled back, until she got a glimpse of my demon teeth and screeched and ran away. She really booked. I don't blame her. I don't have the most welcoming of grins. I need to find out if there are others like her, so I'll be stalking her now. Like I do.

From a distance, of course. I don't want her to freak out again.

LATER!

Unbelievable! The girl belongs to an entire tribe! There must be close to a hundred of them. They're all dressed like her, with animal-skin hats and sweater hides. Awesome camouflage, really. They're so . . . interesting to watch. I was too young to have any real memories of how people behaved and interacted. And my time with Simon was in a world of our own. We weren't trying to be human. We just tried to be . . . alive.

I still don't know for sure if the tribe's human or not. I'm lurking outside their village trying to . . . wait. Is she telling them about me? I gotta go get a closer listen.

Well, they're human, all right, but they don't trust me at all. Their leader is nice but kinda dumb. I went in to meet them and made the mistake of showing them my teeth. Just like the girl, they freaked. I must look like some sort of beast to them, no better than our common enemy, the vampire. I understand, though. They've been tricked before, just like I was by that jerk vamp.

I should still stick close by. There are still plenty of vampires around. They've been keeping their distance from me, for good reason. But all this human blood in one place is a disaster waiting to happen.

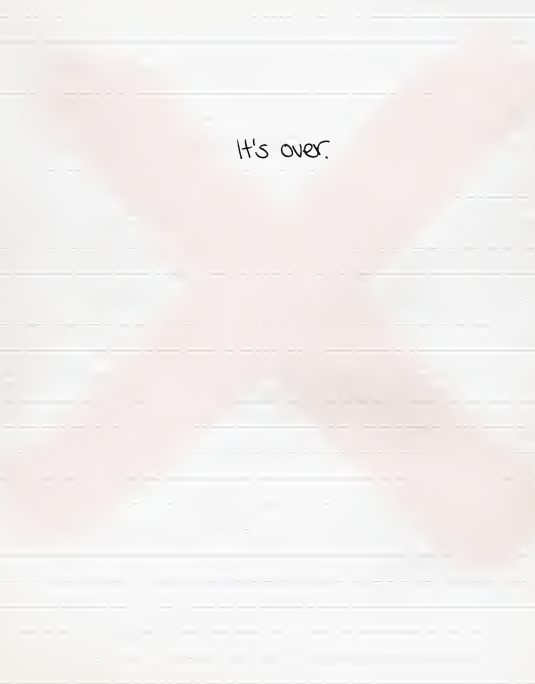
One week later...

Last night the "Girl" (that's what I'm calling her now) had a change of heart and snuck me a turkey leg, like a peace offering. They've accepted me! Good thing, too, because without me on their side, this could all turn ugly real fast.

I don't think they trust me entirely yet, but I think they understand that if I'd wanted to hurt them, I would've done it by now.

They're on the move, and I'm going with them. The girl's tribe have been packing up and assembling the troops for a few days now. They're headed for the ocean. They say there's an old, rusty freighter waiting for them there, big enough to take them all far, far away to someplace safer. I'm going to follow the humans to protect them,





It's over.

I can't remember how long it's been. I didn't feel like doing anything after it happened. I got through it, but I'm still fighting something inside my own mind.

Brutal? Or brave? Benevolence? Or betrayal? Broken? Or born again?

The vampires were waiting for them at the docks. Deadly and powerful vampires came in full force, far more damaging than I ever could have imagined. It was bad. To make a long story short, I won.

One of them had a weird name: "Hierophant." He was strong, but I was fast. I dusted him. But as he went down, he clawed me and whispered, "There's always a price." My father's words play in my head like a broken record. It's as if he knew this would happen. "Nature's a balance. There's always a price. For every give, there's a take, and for every success, a sacrifice."

The humans were saved, but I knew in my heart there was still something evil out there. I could feel it. A strong, dark presence I could feel coming closer. I finally saw him in the mist.

The worst and most powerful vampire.

The one I have been training for, for what seemed like an eternity.

The Vampire King.

What went on between us, I'd rather not say. The darkest moments are over. The vampires are no longer a threat. They're gone. Every last one. Their powers are still around, though. In me.

It's terrible carrying around the darkness left behind by those creatures. I've never felt so trapped within my own mind and body. All I have left are questions. And the nightmares.

What if I've become the very monster I once feared?


I'm now part human, part demon, part vampire.

It's still too intense for me to talk about. It definitely freaked me out. Like the vamps, I can levitate. I can fly. And plenty of other weird things I don't want to talk about. If it wasn't for the bad feelings, it might actually be fun. But it isn't.



The worst thing? The craving.

The color red is the trigger. It's a hunger.
I'm not used to the New Me. It's overwhelming.



I might not be writing for a while. I'm taking Schwabl away for a little well-earned rest. Write some lyrics, maybe practice my axe, and try to relax and forget it all, at least for a little while.

Even though I didn't ask for these stupid powers, at least flying will come in handy. I can carry Schwabl now, and we can cover more ground in less time. I just don't know how flying or any of the powers really work yet. So, for better or worse, a trip is one way to find out. I need to get out of here.

The nightmares are getting worse.



Today I was packing a duffel bag for both of us and realized I should write a song about how freaked out I've been.

Singing helps me get the dark stuff out of my system. I got the lyrics.

"Seeing Red" (A song by M. Abadeer)

I dream of cherries, sweet strawberries
Blood, fire, ketchup. I need red.

If I don't get a taste of it, some licorice,
I'm dead.

I'm seeing red, that's what I said
I'm seeing red.

I'm try'n' live up in a tree
And spit down crimson apple seeds
Oh no, I'm stuck, someone call a fire truck
I'll suck that fire engine red up

Scarlet looks so tasty
Can't shake my ruby craving.
Don't want to be the worst
But I can't control my thirst

I'm seeing red, that's what I said
I'm seeing red.

I'm sorry, friend, you cannot trust
This is the end, for my bloodlust.
It's just too strong
It feels so wrong
But then it feels so right
Maybe just one bite



Wait-no! Must've been that tomato
Expired like eight days ago
It's making my mind go crazy, yo

I'm seeing red
That's what I said
I'm seeing red.

Who am I? What have I done to my poor, darling Schwabl????

Oh Schwabl, I'm so sorry! I never intended to hurt you. The thirst has made me do something unforgivable!

It was so cold outside, so we took shelter in a cave and cuddled up together, safe and warm. I was so tired and happy I couldn't wait to fall asleep with you. I should have never let my guard down! I thought my wild dreams had come to an end after being transformed. I have been so consumed with my new powers that I had completely forgotten about my old self. The sleepwalking, the soul sucking. . . . How could I think those would just disappear???

I dreamt we were lost high up in the tundra. Hundreds of miles of barren wilderness with no trees or shade and no food or water. By the time I realized we were in danger, I'd grown too weak to fly. The sunlight was killing us. It felt so real, Schwabl. No reds, nothing I could feed on. And when I was about to die for sure. I had to take the only red I could find.

Oh, Schwabl, I'm so ashamed! You trusted me, and in return I sucked the color from your soft red fur! Taking revenge upon the vamps has hardened me, changed me into this. . . thing. When I drained all the red from you, it turned you white, and weakened you even further.

The strength flowing into my body finally shook me out of my dream. I woke up knowing something was terribly wrong. I looked down at you, pale and limp in my arms, and realized I had drank all the color from my best and only friend in the world. I almost threw up!

How can I trust myself with anyone ever again? You trusted me & I hurt you.

I'm the worst creature who ever lived.

I am keeping you warm while you wheeze

and groan, but you're dying, Schwabl!

I need to save you. I need to find help!



The Wizards

I'd heard about them from Simon when I was a little girl. He'd tell me stories over the campfire. So I wasn't completely unprepared when I came upon some of them, although I had to play everything by ear.

I needed to revive Schwabl after nearly killing him. I knew that wizards dealt in rebirthing spells and weird life-and-death stuff like that.

I followed the sounds and wizard smells and stalked them for miles. I crept up to their camp in the woods. I hid in bushes and eavesdropped on their talk over the fire. The leader read from a musty book called "The Enchiridion," which sounded like an old book for losers.

When they fell asleep, I turned invisible, crept into their camp, and put my hand over the mouth of one of the head wizards. I hissed at him and told him I needed a spell to revive the dead. He took some convincing, but I'd learned a few tricks from the vampires. He was craftier than he looked, though. When he finished writing the spell, he turned as if to leave and then shot a **FIREBALL**

from his BUTT! I couldn't believe it! I ducked just in time, grabbed his loser book, whacked him on the head with it, and flew away. Serves him right! I had the book and the spell I needed.

Schwabl was waiting.

INSTRUCTIONS

HOW TO REVIVE A BEAST
FROM THE MAW OF DEATH:

ONE
DIG A SHALLOW HOLE,
FILL HOLE WITH ROSE PETALS

TWO
PLACE THE BEAST'S CARCASS
IN THE HOLE

THREE
PLACE RUBIES ON ITS EYES,
A CHICKEN ON ITS STOMACH,
AND
FLAPJACKS ON ITS PAWS

FOUR
RECITE THE INCANTATION:
BEASTIE, GREASIE,
DOGGIE, WOGGIE,
MAPULAMUNI
RISE! RISE! RISE!

FIVE
REPEAT THE BEAST'S NAME
IN RISING INTONATIONS

SIX
FROM A GOLDEN CHALICE
POUR WATER
OVER THE BEAST

...

AND THE BEAST WILL RISE!

SCHWABL MUST RISE



I did it. I saved him. I resurrected Schwabl.

I still feel guilty about it, but his spirit is alive and well. I can still pet him, and he wags his tail like before. He seems like he's half real dog and half ghost. I can still feel him snuggling next to me at night, but once in a while he's not quite all there. A little less solid than before.

The good news is that after a solid cuddle-sesh, he seems fine with being undead. He's glad that I won't have to face the world alone. Because he's here with me now forever, and he loves me.

I'll always regret what
I did. I let my thirst
get out of control.

But at least
he's white now.
No more temptations.



Schwabl and I have been flying around the whole world together. It's been fun, but after all our adventures, way exhausting. I keep the Schwabster tucked in my coat when we fly, or sometimes I sling a belt around us and he rides on my back. And since he's a little ghostly now, he's softer to cuddle with at night.

As we traveled, I could see that the earth is slowly being buried in snow. It's as if the storm was following me. For a while I wondered if maybe Simon was trying to find me, or maybe the crown was telling him to destroy the world with ice!

And that's when I remembered two important things that made everything come full circle, that gave me a purpose:

1. When my Dad was trying to wise me up to the ways of the world, he told me that the race of vampires were ancient. He said they'd been on earth before humans, and that when the Ice Age began, they hibernated underground until it was over. He said the living dead can fall into a deep sleep for hundreds of years if necessary.

2. Simon had once told me that after the war, we might be in for a magical cataclysm. He said it might take the form of a very long global winter that could last for several hundred years.

Since there were no signs of civilization and no signs of food, I've made the decision to hibernate. If a bear can do it, then a ghost-pup and a human-demon-vampire girl can do it.

I found a cave near a volcano. It's protected from the elements, and a little warmer than outside, at least. I set up a cozy room with a pile of luminous rocks for a nightlight. We'll be safe here. We've got our blankies, sleeping bags, all snuggly, cuddling with my doggie and Hambo. Somehow I know that when I wake up, this wasteland will have evolved.

When I wake up, I might meet my Dad again and finally learn the rest of the story. Why I was alone, what happened between him and Mom.

But I was lucky I met Simon. I miss him so much. Maybe I'll see him again someday, somehow. I love him as much as I love my Dad. Maybe more.

After our long sleep, when this magical icy climate dissolves, I hope Schwabl and Hambo and I wake up to find ourselves in a New World and a New Beginning.

These are the last things I want to see before we hibernate.

The pictures.

My pillow's wet
with tears.

I love you, Mom.

It's perfect
that the last
thing I'll see is
you and me,
so I can dream
about you.



I'm using The Enchiridion as my pillow.
And I thought of one more poem before we go to sleep.
Then I'll say goodnight, Mom, and goodnight, world.

"GOOD NIGHT, WORLD"

Inside a frozen world forsaken
Haunted by skeletal ghosts who mourn
In a hundred years, a girl awakens
Into a mysterious realm reborn.

Sleep heals ghostie dogs and you,
So let it all go and float upstream.
Fireflies will light the world anew
So

close

your

eyes,

Marceline,
and

dream

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ADVENTURE TIME:

THE ENCHIRIDION & MARCY'S SUPER SECRET SCRAPBOOK!!!

BY MARTIN OLSON & OLIVIA OLSON

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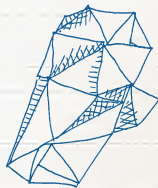
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"DADDY, WHY DID YOU EAT MY FRIES?"
BY REBELCA SUGAR + PENDLETON WARD
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PHOTO BY STEVE ROELFS/WORLD DOMINATION DESIGNS

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Martin and Olivia wish to thank their friend Pendleton Ward for inviting them into the beautiful world of *Adventure Time*.



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